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Menagerie in 7 Sharp

H. W. Hensheimer

Menagerie in 7 Sharp



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Menagerie in 7 Sharp

1.

Passenger on the Ark

GOOD LUCK," I said as Ernst Krenek went down the narrow winding stairs that lead from the Artists' Room of Boston's Symphony Hall to the stage. He looked back at me with a worried and uneasy smile, waved his hand, and was gone. I hurried down myself and went out into the auditorium. When I reached my seat I heard a mild trickle of applause as Ernst made his way across the stage through the orchestra and bowed to the audience. He shook hands with the concertmaster, sat down at the piano, and looked up to the conductor. The conductor raised his baton, the orchestra snapped to attention, and the first American performance of Ernst Krenek's Piano Concerto No. 2 began. It was three o'clock on the afternoon of November 4, 1938.

I glanced over the audience. It was a typical Friday-afternoon audience of old distinguished-looking ladies, and here and there a scattering of old distinguished-looking gentlemen. Every Friday afternoon for generations had found them there—always in Row F, Seat 11, never in 12, never in 10, never in Row E.

I bequeath to my son Jonathan F., IV, all my properties on Beacon Street, my house in Martha's Vineyard, my stocks and bonds and shares and Seat 11, Row F, for the Friday-afternoon series of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

As I looked around I felt nervous and uncomfortable, like a stranger who had gotten into the wrong funeral. Everybody seemed to know everybody, and they greeted each other with the assured nonchalance of people who had grown old together in Row F. Ernst and I seemed to be the only people in that hall who hadn't been here for the last twelve hundred Friday afternoons.

Ernst Krenek had only recently come to America from Vienna. I had been his friend and publisher there for many years. Now I was living in New York. This was my first trip to Boston. I had come to welcome him and to be present when he made his first appearance in an American concert hall. I knew that it was an important occasion for him.

He had once been a successful composer. His operas and symphonies had been performed everywhere, and even the Metropolitan Opera in New York had presented one of his works only a few years ago. But now he was a refugee from fascism. His music had been banned. His properties had been confiscated. He had come to America to begin all over again, and this was his first public appearance in many months.

I sat back in my seat and looked around. None of these people knew Ernst Krenek; very few had ever heard his name. I watched them thumbing through their pro-

grams, searching for information. I knew the concerto he was playing. It was written in a very modern idiom. It was radical, atonal, aggressive music. I had been present when it had been booed and hissed in Europe.

I looked at the man and the old lady next to me. They were lovely people all right, but they couldn't possibly enjoy the strange music that came floating from the stage. But they did not whistle, they didn't boo, they didn't walk out. They sat there quietly in their seats, looking at their programs and the stage, and listening. And when the music came to a close they applauded—and so did all the nice people in Row F, Seat 11, and in Rows E and G and L. The whole Friday-afternoon audience of old and distinguished people in Boston applauded a young radical composer from abroad.

I wasn't fooled by the applause. I knew that this wasn't the enthusiastic approval of Krenek's new Piano Concerto. I had spent all my life with composers and artists and I knew by now every shade and brand of applause. I knew the applause that crashes through a house like the flood through a broken dam. You can't regulate it, you can't control it; it grows and grows, feeding on itself, and when it's over you don't have to wait for the newspapers any more. You go home happy and get drunk.

I knew the polite applause: the hands clap, but the hearts are silent.

I knew the frozen-smile applause of friends and aunts and employees that deceives nobody but the smiling, bowing fool on the stage. I knew the hysterical applause

fanned by paid *claqueurs* and unpaid bobby-soxers.

I knew the anemic applause that lures the artist back on the stage to take his bow and deserts him before he reaches again the safety of the wings in humiliating, blushing flight through the stony silence of oblivion.

I knew the applause of the lost patrol, of those determined seven enthusiasts who defy a hostile and silent crowd of two thousand, bravely upholding their lost cause.

I knew the society applause, clap-clap with gloved finger tips, eyes on the diamond wrist watch, yawns hidden in fur coats.

But when I tried to classify the applause of that Friday-afternoon audience in Symphony Hall I couldn't do it. It was a new and different kind of applause.

"We don't know yet what kind of a bird you are, stranger," the applause seemed to say to Ernst Krenek, who had come back on the stage to take a bow. "But we are going to give you a chance. We'll do it because you are a fellow man, because you are an artist, because you came here as did we and our forefathers, to seek freedom and opportunity. We want you to give us your best, and we will give you shelter, a house, and a table. Forget what is behind you. Look ahead. This is not another country. This is another continent. It is another world. We will help you and we expect you to help us."

I looked at Ernst just taking his second and last bow. He looked happy, assured, completely changed. He didn't stoop any more; the worried look had disappeared from his face. He had been accustomed to being booed because his music was modern, destructive, subversive, dan-

gerous. Or because he was a Catholic. Or because he had dined with a Jew. Or because he had written books and articles as a musician, a liberal, or just as a human being. And now he was standing here and people who didn't know him and had never heard of him applauded his music. I knew that he didn't deceive himself. He, too, had gone through every shade of public reaction from the jubilant hosanna to the shrieking "Crucify him!" I was sure he didn't think that now everything was fine and that there was nothing to worry about any more. But I saw from his face that he, too, had read the message of the applause.

After he had left the stage the sudden crescendo of buzzing voices, clapping seats, dropping programs, hellos, and how-do-you-dos filled the hall. The people next to me kept quiet. The old lady was reading the program. After a little while she looked up and turned to her husband. And now she said something that should put that unknown Boston lady among the great thinkers of our time.

"Conditions," the old lady said, "conditions in Europe must be dreadful."

I never forgot these words. I didn't have the heart (and I didn't know enough English) to speak to the old lady. I wanted to tell her that no music critic, no scholar, and no news commentator had ever found a verdict so clear, so simple, and so final. She had said all that was to be said about the music she had just heard: the fear in the music, the confusion, the shock, the tension, the despair, the emptiness, the decaying philosophy of the

dead end. I had lived through all the phases of decline and collapse in Europe and I understood that she had drawn a clear line between the Old and the New World, the world that had produced that music and the New World, her world.

“Conditions must be dreadful in Europe. . . .”

For three hundred years all the music the world had known and enjoyed had come from Europe. The great singers had come from there, the great pianists, the great composers. Ballets and operas, symphonies and string quartets, oratorios and masses. For three hundred years Europe had been the home of music.

But this European composer who just left the stage of Symphony Hall was not a visitor from Europe. He wasn't here to pick up a few dollars and go back to his Vienna. His Vienna was gone. His Europe was gone. He was not a visiting European artist any more.

He was a passenger on Noah's ark.

The ark had been crowded with brilliant names that came to find refuge across the ocean and that would soon become integrated in the absorbing vastness of the New World. Arturo Toscanini had been on the ark, and Bruno Walter. Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg, Paul Hindemith and Kurt Weill and Darius Milhaud and Béla Bartók. It was the great exodus, a one-way traffic across the sea that was to make history.

The ark had been ready when the great storm was still high on the horizon and the fire of death still hidden in the torch. There were books on the ark and scores, thoughts and dreams, melodies and chords. The wisdom

of centuries, the knowledge of many generations, the ardent desire to continue and to live. It was all there, the treasures of a long and rich history that now was slowly coming to an end, that treasure which was now to be added to the sprawling wealth of the New World.

When the dove returned the doors were opened. The voyage was completed and all were safe.

2.

Keep Your Hat On

Nobody noticed me when I left the ship. I wasn't a composer or conductor, no scholar and no baritone. I was a member of the lowest caste in the intricate hierarchy of music, a music publisher. And I was not even a publisher of gay dance tunes and tearful song hits. I had spent all my life among symphony composers, operatic conductors, music critics, and people who liked string quartets.

I was not only a music publisher, I was a high-brow.

No brass bands waited for me at the pier, no limousines whisked me away, nobody took my picture as I came down the gangplank, and nobody offered me a job. The only person who had come to welcome me was my old friend, Dr. Booth, with whom I had studied twenty years ago in Heidelberg. As I discovered him in the crowd I happily took my hat off and swung it in a wide arc, as was customary in Europe when you greeted a man.

"Keep your hat on," Dr. Booth said stiffly. "We don't do that here. You are not in Vienna any more. You are in America."

I did not mind it. I was excited and happy to be here and I did not mind criticism a bit. I was eager to learn.

Many times I had crossed borders in Europe. But now I had crossed an ocean. This was not just another country, it was another continent. You step ashore and already the first thing you do is wrong. People don't take their hats off when they greet other people in America. I would remember that. I would never take my hat off again.

I turned around and there was Edith, Dr. Booth's wife. "Hello, Edith," I said.

"Take your hat off when you talk to a lady," said Dr. Booth. "You are not in Vienna any more. You are in America."

The first week of a greenhorn's life in America is an exciting mixture of exalted happiness, wide-eyed amazement, and creeping fear. It is a wonderful week. I arrived in New York late at night, and all I saw on that first drive from the pier to my hotel on the east side was the sudden blinding flash as we dived into the floodlight of Broadway.

But the next morning I was up early. I stepped out on the street to begin the unforgettable first hike through the ravine of Forty-second Street.

For the first time in my life I saw a drugstore. I went in, climbed on one of the stools, and—for the first time—had breakfast at a counter.

"Toasted English," I heard a man next to me give his order—and "Toasted English," I repeated when it

was my turn. I didn't know what toasted English was, but when I got it I loved the taste and the smell of the muffins and for weeks to come I would enter the drug-store every morning and order, with the swaggering ease of an old-timer, "Toasted English"—till at last I had guts (and English verbs) enough to ask for a menu and order corn flakes or orange juice and two soft-boiled eggs.

While I was waiting for my first breakfast I watched people coming in the store not to eat but to buy hot-water bottles, shirts, and aspirins. It was all new, and so was the punched check the man behind the counter handed me, and his refusal to take my money, and the cashier at the cigar counter who took it.

Back on the street I saw my first skyscraper. I made my first trip in an American elevator to God knows what floor. I discovered my first Western Union office with sloppily dressed boys lined up on the benches like birds on telephone wires. I ducked when I heard the first elevated train thundering over my confused head. I saw the marquees of movie theaters rotating their mad ribbons of light at nine o'clock in the morning. I joined the silent watch of the sidewalk superintendents. I saw a row of men propped up high like pashas on their thrones getting sparkling shines from chatting Negro boys while they read tremendous newspapers, the size of which I had never seen.

The trolley cars were different, the busses, the taxis, the Negroes, the Chinese laundries, the barber poles, the steam shovels, the pushcarts, the fire escapes, the news-

stands, the dirt, the speed, the noise, the air, the light, the climate, the smell, the ugliness, and the beauty. Everything was overwhelming and frightening and very, very wonderful.

But the most wonderful thing was the people.

As has everybody, I had brought with me a list of people I had known or heard of or was recommended to, and with the trembling anticipation of the explorer who starts out on a new and uncharted journey, I began my first expedition through the endless vastness of the Manhattan telephone book. My heart would beat with that extra pang of the lucky discoverer every time I encountered in printed reality one of the names I had brought all the way across the Atlantic in my soiled little notebook.

Anybody you call during your first week of life in America seems overjoyed. Everybody comes right to the phone. Nobody "just stepped out for a moment," nobody "isn't at his desk right now," and nobody "will call you back later."

"You are really here, in New York. How wonderful! You must come and see us. Are you free for dinner tonight?" Of course you are free. You go to dinner tonight and to lunch tomorrow and to cocktails and concerts and shows, and for the week end you have your choice between Great Neck, Westport, and Mamaroneck.

When you come home at night you find a message to call Butterfield 3-6754. You call and it's a Mrs. McKay. She has heard from Mrs. Booth that you just arrived from Europe and my husband and I would so much like

to meet you and won't you come and have cocktails we're having a few people in on Friday at five.

Friday at five you go to the McKays' and there are thirty people and this is Mr. Heinsheimer, pardon me, *Doctor* Heinsheimer who just arrived from Vienna isn't that interesting howdoyoudo glad to meet you Doctor I didn't get your name so you just arrived here from Austria hello Doc glad to meet you well tell us all about Vienna. Pardon me I want you to meet Mr. Tompkins.

By now you have had many cocktails and so has Mr. Tompkins who tells you that he is the president of the American Merchandise Company and he gives you his card and asks you to be sure to call him next week let's say Tuesday at eleven o'clock—he wants to take you out for lunch because you are just the type of man he would like to talk to about a job. You carefully put his card in your wallet and glad to have met you and don't forget to call me, young fellow, and good-by Mrs. McKay thanks for asking me yes I had a wonderful time good-by sir thank you thank you very much. And you go home and make a note on your calendar call Tompkins Tuesday eleven o'clock.

Yes, this first week in America is a wonderful week. It is your honeymoon with New York and all is honey. Every day you have free luncheons and dinners and shows and cocktails and all you pay for is your toasted English in the morning and an occasional nickel for a bus or a subway. But the following Monday you have no invitation and you go and buy yourself a lunch at the Shanty. You don't look at the dishes but at the prices, and where

it says fifty cents, yes, miss, that's what I would like to have.

Tuesday at eleven o'clock you go to a drugstore and call the American Merchandise Company and ask for Mr. Tompkins, Mr. Arthur B. Tompkins.

"Mr. Tompkins's office," the lovely sound of a flutelike voice comes over the wire, alluring and reassuring. You tell the voice that Mr. Tompkins has asked you to call and will she please put him on.

"What was your name again?" sings the sweet voice, and you repeat your name and will you please spell it for me and thank you and will you please hold on while I see whether Mr. Tompkins is in? So you wait till she comes back and any moment your nickel will drop, but no, there she is, flute-voice is back, and I am awfully sorry he stepped out for a moment.

"He told me to call at eleven."

"I am awfully sorry, but he isn't here right now."

"Well, I will call later."

"No, I don't think that's a good idea I really don't know when he will be back why don't you leave your number I'll have him call you as soon as he comes back yes you can be sure I'll give him the message thank you for calling."

But Tompkins never calls back, so after three days you call flute-voice again but he just stepped out again, yes, of course, I gave him your message but you see Mr. Tompkins has been awfully busy these days. This time you don't spell your name and don't leave your telephone number because you begin to understand that Tompkins

will always have stepped out for a moment and you take his card from your wallet and tear it up.

Soon you will learn more. You will learn, for instance, to understand what it means when a man tells you:

“We must have lunch one of these days.”

You will learn to understand that that man has just given you the supreme kiss of death. You will learn that if a man *really* wants to lunch with you he will take his notebook out and put in: “Lunch Wednesday 1 at Howie’s.” A man who says he wants to have lunch with you “one of these days” wants *never* to have lunch with you. He just is telling you, in a subtle and refined way, that he doesn’t want to see you ever again, that you are thin air to him, and that he will completely forget your very existence before he walks half a block down to Fifty-second Street.

You keep on learning a lot of things you didn’t think you would ever have to learn, and you learn them all the hard way. But there is one consoling feature: you make wonderful progress with your English. The days are gone when you had to order toasted English because you didn’t know any other dishes. You can handle every situation with ease and relaxation. You soon begin to adorn your growing vocabulary with an abundant assortment of “guys” and “buds” and “O.K.s” and “hells” and “you bets” and “swells” and “damns.” They are just a little bit too numerous and a little bit too loud, and they stick out of the simple bunting of your language like cheap paper flowers in noisy pink.

People begin to comment on your English. It is am-

brosia to your ears and nectar to your heart when they tell you, "It's amazing how you speak English," or when they want to know how many years you spoke English before you came here. At night, before you go to sleep, you read your paper aloud and admire your perfect pronunciation in the solitude of your bedroom. You can't even hear a trace of an accent any more. Your language problems are over; hell, even Frankfurter was born in Vienna and look at him today: he is a judge of the Supreme Court.

But then one nice afternoon you take a cab. The cabby's name is Emil Wasservogel, and you get in and all you say is, "Twelve West Seventh Street," just four short words, and Wasservogel turns around and says, "*Schönes Wetter heute.*" You could kill him in cold blood. To him you are no Yankee. To him you are just a Riding Dutchman.

You are ready to cry. But you won't admit anything, not even to cabby Wasservogel. You pretend that you didn't hear what he just said. You sit back in the cab and murmur a muffled "Nice day, isn't it?" with all the New England accent you think you can muster, and Wasservogel turns around and shrugs his shoulders and probably thinks that you are an awful schmock. When you arrive at your destination you hand him a dollar, take your change, give him his tip, and don't say another word. But while you enter the house you hear his cheerful "*Auf Wiedersehen*" echoing all over West Seventh Street.

So it's the accent, you think, and maybe it will take

me another year till I get rid of it; Frankfurter, I am sure, has none, or how could he be a Supreme Court judge, but otherwise I am getting along fine.

You don't know it, but you still have a long, long way to go.

Slowly your wardrobe, all the nice things you brought with you from Europe, your suits and handkerchiefs and stockings, begin to wear out and the day arrives when you have to buy yourself a new shirt, your first American shirt. You take it home and take the pins out and look at it. You discover that it's different from the shirt you were used to wearing all your life: you can button it up all the way down. You open all the buttons and put it on. It's the first time that you don't have to slide in a shirt with your arms raised, struggling to get your hands through the sleeves, blindly feeling your way around the room, upsetting the vase with faded roses on the chest, till at last you emerge, your hair, your room, your new shirt messed up. This time you put on a shirt with your eyes open, your head erect, in the proud posture of a free man in a free country.

You get dressed and leave the house. You feel different. That shirt does something to you. You feel that you are one of sixty million American men walking around in an American shirt. You have advanced an important step, a step away from the past, a step nearer to the future. That shirt makes you feel relaxed as you have not been in a long time. You are not quite as much of a stranger any more while you walk through the streets of New York.

You go home and send all your European shirts to the Salvation Army and go out and buy yourself half a dozen shirts on Broadway and Seventh Avenue. And you do it at ten o'clock at night, when there isn't one single store open all over Europe where you could buy a shirt.

The shirt is followed by a suit and shorts and socks and shoes. At long last the transformation is completed. You feel different, you walk different, you begin to look different, and slowly, very slowly, you begin to think and to act different. Your Wasservogels are over.

But there are still many mysteries you can't penetrate. When the fellows in the office get together and bet their dimes and quarters on Notre Dame and Michigan you might as well listen to Zulus. All you know is that Notre Dame is a church in Paris. But you won't ask. No, sir, you are right in with the boys and you won't ask even if it kills you.

"Three-to-one odds, six points, tie I win."

You have not the slightest idea what it means, but:

"Sure," you say, "here is my quarter."

Ray Duggan takes your quarter.

"Notre Dame or Michigan?"

"Michigan, of course," you say. Big shot.

The next day Ray hands you seventy-five cents. You take it with the lazy smile of the expert.

"I told you Michigan, didn't I?"

Every day you try to read the sports column, but it's Chinese, just plain Chinese.

"Giants Powder Phillies. Judd faced five men without giving up a run in this second round, as singles by

Gordon and Kerr sandwiched a force-out, Trinkle sacrificed, and Rigney walked to load the bases."

Chinese, Chinese, Chinese.

Southpaw, errors, Lombardi refuses to fret at Judd's stalling tactics, the grand-slam homer, a pass, a double play, five trips to the dish, a two-base passed ball, bagging only seven safeties, Kerr came up with a fielding flash in the fourth, roaming behind the third baseman to collar Verban's grounder, and unleashed a long, underhanded, off-balance throw to nip the batter at first.

You know it will always be Chinese to you. You know you will never, never, never, learn what a two-based pass ball is.

But all the time your transformation goes on. When you first arrived in America you had nice cards printed with your name preceded by a "Dr." Being a European, you are a doctor. A doctor of law or of music or of art or of economics or of something or other. Wherever you go, you introduce yourself as doctor till one day you are at a party and please meet Dr. Heinsheimer, hello Doctor, glad to meet you Doc, howdoyoudo Doctor. Later you have a drink or two and come to talk with a fellow and he asks you Doc will you please come in the bathroom with me for a moment? You are amazed but after all this is a strange country and you better be polite so you go and he puts his hand to his right side and I always have pains here, Doc, I hate to bother you but I thought you might be able to help me Vienna is famous for its good doctors and do you want me to take off my shirt and pants?

From that day on you drop your doctor and are a plain mister and it does you a lot of good. People are nicer to you and easier going, and it doesn't take long till you are no mister any more but Al and Paul and Harry and Herb.

As the transformation takes hold of you, surely and inescapably, you begin to get impatient. You go out and buy yourself a couple of ties that scream like factory whistles. You put your feet on every table till you fall over in your chair and almost break your neck.

You chew gum constantly. You hate it, you can't stand the smell of it, and you never know where to park the thing. But you chew gum.

You keep your hat on in the office and your shirt open and your tie loose. But Ray Duggan at the next desk does something to his tie that you can't do. You try it at home, in front of the mirror for hours. You fold and unfold that tie and study every way of messing it up and making it look loose and comfortable like Ray's. But it doesn't.

You are still stumbling, feeling your way around uncertainly, and people laugh about you or smile if they are polite. But don't worry. That stumbling and feeling around and overdoing and underdoing things, it all does you a lot of good. It slowly weans you away from thirty years of habits and surroundings. It slowly but surely changes your outlook, your ideas, your attitude, your manners, your gestures, your posture, your mind, your soul, and your body.

For thirty years you were used to cutting your meat and then spearing it with your fork and just putting it in

your mouth. But now, one day, you catch yourself putting your knife down on the rim of your platter, changing your fork to your right hand, spearing that piece of meat, and chewing it and swallowing it before you change your fork back to your left hand and take your knife up again.

It's the Great Transformation. You can't stop it. You can't speed it up. It just happens.

The years pass. Two, three, four, five, almost six years pass on till one morning you wait with four hundred excited and elated people in a large courtroom. It is the day you and these four hundred people have been waiting for, the day when you will receive your citizenship.

It is a strange assembly of humanity, people from every sphere of life and social standing. They came from all the four corners of the world. They still have traces of their origin in their features, their language, their clothes, their behavior. But now they are here to be integrated in a new nation, and you can see the great melting pot in operation.

The small door in the rear of the courtroom opens and the judge comes in. The four hundred get up from their seats. They raise their right hands and repeat, in four hundred different accents, the oath that the clerk reads in a firm and loud voice.

"So help me God."

The four hundred hands sink. The judge looks over the crowd with a friendly smile and then he begins to talk. The first two words he says hit you and the four

hundred other people in that room with overwhelming force. A gasp goes through the crowd as the people realize what the judge, an American judge, has just said to them.

He said: "Fellow Citizens."

He means you. You are an American.

Bus Stop in Waco

MY NAME is Max Reiter," said the visitor who rang my doorbell one afternoon a few months after I had settled down in New York. "I arrived here last Monday. Don't you remember me?"

I did. I knew that he had been an orchestral conductor in Germany and Italy. And I knew why he was here and what he wanted before he could say it.

"Of course I do," I said. "Glad to see you. Won't you come in?"

He left his hat and coat on the rack outside, but he clung tenderly and nervously to a large brief case. When he sat down he put it on his knees. I knew before he opened it what was in that brief case.

As the flood kept on rising an ever-increasing number of my old friends and acquaintances had begun to cross the ocean. As they approached the New World with fear and apprehension they looked for a guiding hand and a word of consolation. To them I was not just another greenhorn feeling his way around in a new and unknown wilderness. To them I was a man who had been in America *before* they got here—and that made

all the difference. I was a man with a job, an apartment, and a telephone. The job was worth only twenty-five cents a week; the apartment was a furnished room in a dreary brownstone house on West Eighty-third Street; the telephone wasn't mine, and the landlady gave me a dirty look every time I approached it. But when they got off their ships, bewildered and destitute, I was a rugged pioneer to them, a founding father, Christopher Columbus himself.

How many times had I seen that same battered brief case Max Reiter was holding close to his heart with such determined love. It was always covered with European hotel labels and with the first letters of its owner's name in blue and red, surrounded by "Cunard Line" or "Hamburg Amerika Linie," and it always contained a scrapbook. In the scrapbook were newspaper clippings in German and Czech and Rumanian, and pictures, carefully pasted in and labeled with white and green ink. You could see the owner of the scrapbook shaking hands with General Slivovitz, commander of the Fourth Czechoslovakian Army Corps, after a successful concert in Brno or being the guest of honor at a banquet rendered by the Philharmonic Society of Pécs, Hungary. There were letters in the scrapbook, programs, ribbons which once had adorned laurel wreaths, and always a magazine article, "Our Musical Destiny," with the name of the visitor appearing in a list of twenty-six native geniuses and underlined in red, with a ruler, a pen, and an abundance of love.

"Let me see your scrapbook," I said to Max Reiter

as if I really meant it. He took it carefully out of its wrappings and handed it to me. It was impressive enough with its pathetic collection of faded glory and evaporated success.

"I can't give you any advice," I said. "I have been here myself only a few months. I know just as much and just as little as you. But there is one thing I can tell you, Max. The best thing you can do with your scrapbook is to throw it away. It's so much dead weight. It's too heavy to carry around. Get rid of it, Max, and you will feel lighter and happier."

To my surprise Max Reiter wasn't offended or hurt or disappointed.

He smiled. "What you mean to tell me is forget the past and start all over again."

"That is exactly what I mean. That is really the only bit of advice I can give you. I am glad you can take it. Most people can't."

And I told him the story of Lot's wife, that poor wretch who had looked back and was transformed into a pillar of salt, the very symbol of death and sterility.

"It's a wonderful story to remember for anybody who has just left Sodom and Gomorrah." He nodded. "We mustn't look back."

"No, we mustn't. We must forget what we have done or been or owned or accomplished back in Sodom. Nobody waited for us here, nobody knows us, nobody really cares for anything we have done in Vienna or Berlin or Paris. We must do something here, here in America, to make people again wait for us and know us and care."

I told Max the story of the tiny refugee dog which had just arrived from Vienna and met an American dog at his first outing around the lampposts of Washington Heights.

"In Europe," the little dog said, with his nose high up in the air, "in Europe I was a Saint Bernard."

Max laughed. He took his scrapbook, put it back in the brief case, and—for the first time—let the brief case get out of his reach. He put it on a table in the corner, went back to his chair, and sat down.

"All right," he said, "let's forget the past. Here is something for the present."

From one of his pockets he produced a large manila envelope. He opened it and took out some twenty letters.

"I wasn't so sure myself about my scrapbook," he explained. "I thought I'd better bring these along."

I looked at the letters. Banca Commerciale di Roma was printed on some of the letterheads. Standard Oil Company, Trieste, Italy. The Austrian State Railroad, office of the president. Iron and Steel Works, Skoda, Czechoslovakia. The letters were addressed to bankers and railroad presidents and oil men with American addresses, addresses which spelled money and power and influence in upper-case letters: 1 Wall Street, 120 Broadway, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, the Chrysler Building, New York, New York.

This was something new. All through the night we kept on talking and planning. Max was no fool. As soon as he had arrived he had looked around in that great

city of New York and had come to the conclusion that the quicker he got out of it the better.

He had been to Fifty-seventh Street, the heavily guarded gateway to the American Land of Music. There he had watched that pathetic parade of jobless conductors shuffling for hours and hours up and down the street from Sixth to Seventh Avenue and from Seventh to Sixth. He had seen them duck into the lobby of the Great Northern Hotel whenever they saw one of their fellow jobless conductors approach, or just turn around and glue their eyes to the ham and eggs in the windows of Horn and Hardart till the air was clear again and they could resume their dreary patrol, hoping against hope that Arthur Judson, the great manager, the master over life and death of every conductor in America, would pass them on his way to lunch, smile at them, recognize them, and maybe talk to them.

There was always hope. It had happened to Napoleon's soldiers, hadn't it? "*Ah, mon brave,*" the Emperor would say, stopping suddenly while passing down the ranks, "I know you. You fought with me at Jena. Your name is Aristide Beaumarchais."

Beaumarchais would try to hide his tears, but they would roll down into his mustache.

"*Vive l'Empereur!*" he would shout.

"Thank you, Colonel Beaumarchais," the Emperor would say.

That was all—the Emperor had smiled at him and now Private Beaumarchais was a colonel, leading a regiment into battle.

It *was* worth while waiting for Arthur Judson on Fifty-seventh Street.

But Max did not want to wait. All he had was a few hundred dollars, and he knew that unless he found a job and found it soon he would have to go down to Second Avenue and wash dishes. All night we kept on working on the craziest scheme ever hatched by two greenhorns. I had a few musical handbooks and magazines and a map of the United States. When dawn began to shine through the window we had made up a list of eighteen cities in Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas which had no orchestra and which in our opinion might as well have one. Max was going to get himself an orchestra!

The next day Max took his manila envelope with the twenty letters and went downtown. He rode miles and miles in buzzing elevators, he pleaded with secretaries, he camped patiently in waiting rooms, he left, he came back, and he read seventeen times in seventeen different waiting rooms in seventeen copies of *Life* magazine the story of a man who won a bet by hatching an ostrich egg. The picture of the cute little ostrich this man had hatched after grueling days and nights gave Max confidence, strength, and endurance. If that man could wait till he had hatched an ostrich, *he* could wait till Mr. Cameron would see him.

When the day was over he limped home. His restless dreams were accompanied by the monotonous chant of goingupgoingdowngoingupgoingdown. Every time he tried to get in an elevator it was going in the wrong direction.

"Going up?"

"No, going down."

"Going down?"

"No, going up."

He was forever marooned on the thirty-seventh floor of the Chrysler Building. . . .

Early the next morning he was on the job again. He waited again and pleaded again and came and left and rode up and rode down. He did not look at *Life* magazine any more; he just sat there and stared and waited and hoped. And then he heard for the first time that fateful "Mr. Cameron will see you now." The doors opened and closed behind him, and there was Mr. Cameron, very stiff and very curt, looking at his wrist watch and thumbing through a sheaf of papers on his desk. But after Max had told him that all he wanted was to leave New York and could Mr. Cameron please give him a letter to one of his friends in the South who might help him to form an orchestra, Mr. Cameron was a changed man. He wasn't stiff and curt any more. He pushed away the papers on his desk; he was happy and relieved and called in his secretary. Here was a man who did not ask him for a job or a loan and who did not want to sell him life insurance or a subscription to the *National Geographic*—here was a nut who wanted to conduct an orchestra in Florida or Texas, and if he would only give him the right letter to G. W. in Tampa the man would go away, far, far away, and never come back.

All the bankers and railroad presidents and oil men listened to Max and were suddenly very relieved. They

gave him letters to bankers and railroad presidents and oil men in Florida and Louisiana and Texas: my dear Van Dyke, dear Everett, hello G. W.

When Max had presented the last of the twenty-one letters he had brought from abroad in his manila envelope, he had exchanged them for eighty-four letters, which were now carefully stuck away in a much larger manila envelope. He had \$217. He had the list of the eighteen cities we had worked out. And he had a round-trip ticket on the Greyhound which would always bring him back to New York and the unwashed dishes on Second Avenue. He left, a tired but a happy man.

Soon his first reports came in. Everybody, he wrote, was very nice to him. They all had thrown out the Fuller Brush man and the fellows who wanted to sell them the Encyclopedia Britannica or a vacuum cleaner. But a man who wanted to sell an orchestra—that was something new. Nobody slammed the door in his face; everybody asked him to come in, and how was Mr. Cameron in New York these days? Dear Everett called up Mrs. Everett and she called up her friends, and that same night they gave a party for him with mint juleps and canapés and everybody was very nice. Later, however, dear Everett had taken him to his studio. He had discussed the matter with his friends; this town had all the music they possibly could digest and there really was no chance for Max, but if he would like to go to Norfolk, why, he would be happy to give him a letter to Mrs. MacDuffen, who knew all Norfolk and practically *was* all Norfolk, and he was sure that Norfolk would be just the town for him. They were

much more musically inclined and they had a lovely concert hall and Mr. Jenkins, the organist of the First Congregational Church, was quite a composer.

"You and Mr. Jenkins will have a lot in common."

Max said thank you and dear Everett wrote a letter to dear Edna, and off to Norfolk he went.

Dear Edna was very, very nice and gave him a party with mint juleps and canapés and introduced him to Mr. Jenkins. All Norfolk was at the party, and Mr. Jenkins asked him would Max please have a look at some of his scores; he had them here by chance. Max said yes, of course, he would be happy, and Mr. Jenkins took him upstairs and showed him scores by the score. He played his symphony in C-sharp minor for Max and an "Ode to Walt Whitman" for mixed voices, four soloists, orchestra, and organ. When they came back downstairs everybody had gone home. Mr. Jenkins said could he drive him to his hotel, and this was the end of Norfolk.

In Jacksonville they were sure that St. Petersburg would be eternally grateful for the opportunity of a century. "There is a town for you, Mr. Reiter. And here is a letter to the president of the Chamber of Commerce."

From St. Petersburg he went to Lake Charles. From Lake Charles he went to Baton Rouge.

Mint Juleps. Canapés. Letters. Symphonies in C-sharp minor.

It was by now early in March. Max had entered Texas on the last leg of his trip, and the time was rapidly approaching when people would brush away any intruder with that crushing "See me after Labor Day," which has

made the life of every newcomer in this country—including my own—bitter and hard. Max, by now, judging from the tone of his letters, seemed convinced that nothing would ever come from this succession of humiliations. Only the route of procedure, inescapably prescribed by his round-trip ticket, prevented him from throwing in the towel.

So he kept on going, drinking juleps, boarding busses, checking in in dreary hotels, and checking out. Every day he looked with mounting apprehension at his rapidly dwindling cash reserve.

One early morning he found himself in the bus terminal in Waco, Texas, waiting for a bus to Fort Worth. The early heat of a Texas morning was seeping through the roof. He was deadly tired. He had four more hours to wait for that bus and he thought that he just could not take it any more. He looked at the Coca-Cola box and the soda counter and the newsstand.

Look, listen, lure, leisure, the true detective, the real detective, the super detective, true comics, new comics, blue comics, true sex, new sex, blue sex, murder, love, Hollywood, murder, love, Hollywood, murder, love, Hollywood.

He had seen that same newsstand in dozens of bus terminals, the same Coca-Cola box, the same babies, the same flies, the same custard pie, the same dirt and heat and dust and sweat and weariness and noise.

A distorted voice came over the loud-speaker.

"Your attention, please. Will Mr. Cunningham please come to the ticket counter? We have a message for you. Mr. Cunningham, please."

Crack. Silence.

Crack. "Your attention, please. Mr. Cunningham. We have a message for you."

Crack. Silence.

Crack. "Mr. Cunningham, please. Will you please come to ticket counter No. 3?"

Max's head was empty, floating in a tremendous flood of heat and noise. He stared at ticket counter No. 3 waiting for Mr. Cunningham to emerge and pick up his message. There were several men at the counter, but none of them seemed to be Mr. Cunningham.

Maybe his wife is sick, Max thought. She might die before he gets there to see her. Why doesn't he show up?

Or maybe it's just a message from a friend who wants to meet him for a game of pool this afternoon.

He felt a terrible urge to find out what message was waiting for Cunningham. He knew that if he would stay here two more minutes he would get up and go to counter No. 3.

"My name is Cunningham. You have a message for me."

And just when he was reaching out his hand to get that message the real Cunningham would show up and he, a stranger, a foreigner, would be arrested, disgraced, deported.

"Foreigner poses as Corpus Christi businessman. FBI holding spy without bail."

He jumped up and ran out of the terminal, looking back to see whether he was being followed. But there was nobody. He had escaped.

He looked at his watch. He still had two hours to stroll through the town and have his first and last glimpse of Waco.

People were just beginning to open their shops. Max walked up Main Street and looked at the windows.

Radios, Liggetts, men's suits, adding machines, pocket-books, umbrellas, shoes.

Shoes, shoes, shoes.

China.

He looked at the trays and cups and candlesticks of a china shop, and then his eyes fell on the names painted in the window.

"Mary and Rae Novich," he read.

A bell rang faintly in his head. He sat down on the window sill, opened his portfolio, took out the manila envelope, and looked through the letters. The eighty-four letters he had taken from New York had by now increased to 169. Yes, here was a letter to Miss Mary Novich in Waco, Texas.

Max looked again at his watch. He had fifty-one minutes till his bus was to leave for Fort Worth. He got up and went to the door of the shop. As he entered a melodious bell gave three lovely clangs.

A lady was sitting behind the counter and said, "Good morning."

It was cool and nice and clean in the shop.

"Are you Miss Novich?" Max said.

"Yes, I am Mary Novich." The lady smiled.

But whenever Max Reiter thought back to that day he felt sure that she was not Miss Mary Novich at all.

She was an angel planted behind that counter, an angel to take him away from bus terminals and newsstands and the blaring of loud-speakers, from Mr. Jenkins's symphonies and from the flies settling down on dissolving custard pies.

Four weeks later Max Reiter conducted the first concert of the Waco Symphony Orchestra in the auditorium of Baylor University. It had been a hard road from that solemn moment when Mary Novich had called in her sister and had said: "Rae, haven't I been telling you that what this town needs is a symphony orchestra?"

The two sisters had mobilized the city. They had first enlisted the help of one of Waco's leading citizens, a man who owned half of the town. He had introduced Max to Pat Neff, twice governor of Texas and president of Baylor University. They had formed ladies' committees, junior committees, young men's committees. They had organized sponsors and supporters, active members, honorary members, and lifetime members. Pat Neff had given them the free use of the auditorium for the concert. The teachers on the musical faculty of the university had pledged active participation, and the students had promised to play in the orchestra without pay.

Everything had to be started from scratch. Music was a problem, music stands were a problem, tickets and programs and newspaper ads and ushers were a problem. To brighten up the event, Max wanted a soloist from New York and I persuaded a girl to go all the way down to Waco and play Beethoven's Emperor Concerto for a fee

of \$150. But Max wrote a desperate letter explaining that his budget allowed only \$135 for the soloist. I had to clip the pianist's fee by \$15!

In the meantime Max had begun to work. Slowly and patiently he began to change a skeptical bunch of kids (who had never before played in an orchestra and who spent more time making fun of the foreigner who could not speak proper English than at practicing their music) into a well-integrated body of players. Slowly they lost their skepticism and became imbued with his own enthusiasm and faith. They ceased to be players and slowly became an orchestra. A month later an excited and expectant audience packed every seat in the auditorium of Baylor University as Max's baton came down on the first bar of Rossini's *Cenerentola* Overture.

After the concert a few of Waco's leading businessmen and the editor of the local paper took the exhausted conductor to a hotel across the street and revived him with a couple of drinks.

"They did not give me mint juleps," Max wrote. "I think I'll never have one again in all my life. They gave me straight scotch. When they offered to organize the Waco Symphony Society, to give a first season of four concerts next winter, and to engage me as their conductor, I almost fainted. I heard a tremendous crash. The dishes. The dishes which now I would not have to wash on Second Avenue in distant New York."

But the adventure was not to end here. The next day a delegation of music lovers arrived from San Antonio. They had heard what had happened in Waco and they

felt that what the people of Waco could do they could do. They asked Max would he come and try.

Three months later twenty-five hundred people filled San Antonio's beautiful outdoor arena, the Sunken Garden Theater, to listen to another makeshift orchestra. This time Max had been more ambitious. For weeks he had auditioned musicians. He had imported players from Dallas and Houston and, of course, from his own Waco. He had an exciting program, a brilliant soloist, and a tremendous success. He still conducts in Waco once in a while, but he now leads some sixty concerts every year in San Antonio.

All the great artists from New York and Hollywood come to sing and play with his orchestra in San Antonio, and when he visits New York he doesn't have to trot Fifty-seventh Street any more. He is Colonel Aristide Beaumarchais with horse and medals. He walks right in to Arthur Judson, and Judson says, "Hello, Max, nice to see you. Have a cigar."

When I went down to San Antonio to visit Max a few years later he was not only conducting his two orchestras; he had organized an opera festival, and six thousand people jam-packed the huge municipal auditorium in San Antonio at every performance.

"They come hundreds of miles to see our operas," Max told me proudly. "The opera festival cost the orchestra fifty thousand dollars. But before the first curtain goes up all the money is safely tagged away in the box office." Max smiled. "Still remember Waco, Texas?"

"I do, Max," I said. "I'll never forget it."

How could I ever forget it? This was no longer the private story of Max Reiter. For the first time I had seen for myself what it meant to live in a country that was just starting out on the road to discovery and adventure and whose exciting present was dwarfed by the tremendous contours of its future.

And there was something else I would never forget. When Max Reiter got off that bus he was not an American looking for work in America. He was a foreigner who had been here only a few months. Yet when he asked the people in Waco and in San Antonio for work and for a chance to give them his best, they didn't ask him for his passport and they didn't put him through a test in English. They gave him his day in the court of public opinion and let him state his cause in the one language he could speak and understand: in music. They asked him only one question: How good are you?

I was thinking back to the day when I had made my first trip to Boston to hear Ernst Krenek's Piano Concerto and to meet the man who had done more to advance music in America than any other man I knew. This man was a Russian who after twenty years of life in America still spoke an English, the like of which I had only heard at the evening school for recent immigrants. His name was Serge Koussevitzky. This man was one of the great spiritual leaders of American music. He commissioned American composers year after year and he had performed their music before anybody else had ever looked at it. He had organized a festival in Tanglewood that became one of the great centers of music in America and

in the world. He had created the finest orchestra on the American continent. In Europe this man would always remain a "bloody foreigner." Here in America he was a leader, accepted and adored in the fascinating struggle for a new spiritual future.

When I went backstage during intermission time in Boston the first man I ran into was my old friend, Victor Polatschek, first clarinetist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and formerly a member of the Vienna Philharmonic. He had been here for more than ten years, but he greeted me with an unrestrained "*Grüss Gott*" that echoed through the room. While we were exchanging memories of the Viennese past in German, another group of players next to us were conversing excitedly in French, with all the *O la la's* and the colorful hand waving of the Café de la Paix or the Rue Cannebière in Marseille. They were the Messrs. Lemaire, Tortellier, Artiers, and Voisin. Then there were many gentlemen with wild hair and fiddles. They kept on embracing and kissing one another, and their names were Theodorowicz, Cherkassky, Resnikoff, Gorodetzky, and Fedorovsky. And there were Hansen and Knudson, Diamond and Eisler, Zighera and San Roma, Mazzeo and Valerio, Papoutsakis and Couhape, Kunze and Mayer, Del Sordo, Droeghmans, and even a MacDonald and a Rogers. When they talked it was the Tower of Babel. But when they played it was a great American orchestra.

On the continent where I had come from such a story was unthinkable. In a German orchestra everybody had to be a German. In an English orchestra everybody had

to be an Englishman. Now I was in a country where a man who wanted to play in an orchestra had to be only a good player—and a member of Local 802.

Everything that had happened to Max Reiter had become unthinkable on the old continent. There the pioneers were dead and forgotten. A great past had come to an end. The present was dark and the future shrouded in doubts, despair, fear, and distrust.

But here was a great beginning, and the future was bright and exciting.

The gold still slumbered in the streams and the oil came gushing out of the ocean.

The drums were calling at dawn.

The Blue Danube

I HAD SEEN the last act of the great European drama from a front seat in the first row. Once in a while I had been on the stage myself and had acted my part. Shortly before the final curtain came down I had left and I never went back. It did not take long till I found out that I had not missed much.

But at first it had been a gay and pleasant show. It was a Viennese operetta, and tragedy seemed far away. Everybody was enjoying himself. The music was sweet and schmalzy.

As the curtain went up in the summer of 1921 a river boat was sliding gaily down the Danube through the lovely Austrian countryside on its way to Vienna. At the railing leaned a young man of twenty-one looking happily over the hills and vineyards and castle ruins. That young man was me.

It was a lovely trip. I was at that time studying law in the little German town of Heidelberg and now I was on my way to Vienna to spend a vacation in the house and at the expense of my rich uncle. It was my first trip to Vienna, which was then the most desirable city in all

Europe for a young man of twenty-one. While the boat wound its difficult path down the narrow river I looked excitedly and with mounting anticipation at the pretty villages and little towns perched between the water and the steep slopes. Every so often the boat would slow down with a tremendous noise, shouting of crews, throwing of ropes, and splashing of water, and would be moored for a few minutes at an old battered jetty to take on crowds dressed in the colorful costumes of the Austrian countryside. Soon the bell would ring again, shouts, laughter, waving good-bys, ropes flying high through the air. Again the wheels would begin to kick up foaming hills of water, and faster and faster the little town would slide away.

This is going to be a wonderful vacation, I thought. Little did I suspect that it was going to be much more and that within a few hours the course of my whole life would be determined. Meanwhile I enjoyed the sunshine, the water, the crowds, the pretty girls, and Austrian coffee with floating mountains of whipped cream. I kept on looking over the railing till the hills began to slope down to the plains, becoming lower and lower as the river broadened its bed, and were at last devoured by the plains. All of a sudden I saw the city, its towers and steeples and cupolàs standing out clearly in the evening haze as we glided down the last stretch of our voyage to a pretty little harbor.

The engines died down; I took my little bag and walked down the gangplank. I was in Vienna, and there was my uncle and a beautiful *Zweispänner*, a brilliantly

polished carriage with two lively brown horses and a coachman in a gray derby, with a tremendous mustache and a red carnation in his lapel. It was all in style, and even the hoofs of the horses seemed to stamp a Viennese waltz rhythm on the cobblestones as we rode down the Ringstrasse.

That same night (as almost every night) there was a party at my uncle's house. In the middle of the evening the door opened and in came a little old man. He seemed to know everybody, and no sooner had he seen a stranger in that crowd of friends than he asked my uncle who I was. My uncle motioned me to come over and be introduced. Only much later would I find out that this was the decisive moment of my life.

The old man's name was Joseph Simon.

"Young man," he said, "I am the brother-in-law of Johann Strauss. Would you like to come to my house and see my collection, my Johann Strauss collection?"

The next day I went to see Joseph Simon and his Johann Strauss collection in his old house at the Schottentor in Vienna. My uncle had carefully briefed me for the visit. He had told me that this collection was the old man's pride, his life, his everything! Half a century ago Simon had been accidentally touched by the wing of immortality when his wife's sister married the waltz king, and he had never recovered from the shock. From now on he wasn't just Joseph Simon, a rich man whose only profession it had been to cut coupons from stocks and bonds; from now on he was forever Pepi, the brother-in-law. He at once became a great connoisseur

of music and an ardent collector of everything ever used, touched, looked at, or thrown away by the great Johann. His apartment was bulging with Johann Strauss relics: pictures, programs, first prints, ladies' fans with fading inscriptions, an old bow tie, a single glove, and an unending array of similar nineteenth-century *firlefanzen*.

"This photo was given to my brother-in-law by the late Grand Duke of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha. Look here what His Grace wrote on it in his own hand."

I looked. I read. This was Vienna in the summertime and I was twenty-one years old. I still can smell the dust on the grand duke's picture. But I stuck it through. I admired medals, batons, slippers, hats, buttons, strings, telegrams, exclamation marks, menus, collars, garters, and violins. I admired, I commented, I agreed, I liked, I hoped, I asked, I smiled, and Joseph Simon was delighted.

"Young man," he said, "you seem to have an ardent and serious interest in music. How would you like to work in a big music-publishing house? I am the chairman of the board of Universal Edition. If you want I take you there tomorrow. I will ask Emil Hertzka to give you a job."

This struck me like thunder. Universal Edition at that time was the most powerful and the most progressive publishing house in Europe. Emil Hertzka, the manager, was not just a man. He was an idea. To be invited to meet him without even having asked for it was like having Rockefeller ring your doorbell one morning and beg you to have breakfast with him.

However, when I excitedly told my uncle about my unexpected luck he seemed less impressed and rather reluctant to congratulate me as a future president of Universal Edition, a position to which I had already advanced myself between lunch and supper. Pepi, it appeared, was not only a harmless brother-in-law, he was the majority stockholder of three corporations (one of them Universal Edition) and chairman of the board of all three. When this honor had been bestowed on him nobody had ever thought that he would make use of it in any other capacity than as the man who was to get up at a meeting once a year to say, "Gentlemen, I herewith call the meeting to order," and then settle down to sleep till someone would wake him up to tell him that it was all over.

This had turned out to be a grave if not fateful misjudgment. Simon took his job in quite a different spirit and, as chairman of the board, at once proceeded to take an active interest in the business. Every morning he would set out at an early hour in his old-fashioned automobile to descend on the unfortunate men in charge of the three companies. He would settle down for a chat on the day's events, offering advice and criticism, to the disgust—nay, terror—of his helpless victims. The one redeeming feature was that he would devote precisely one hour to each of the three companies, but this was canceled out by the fact that he was always switching schedules so that none of them ever knew when his activities would be interrupted and stalemated for sixty minutes by a cheerful "Good morning! What's new today?"

No doubt in my honor Pepi made Universal Edition his first stop the next day. Their offices were located in a building which housed Vienna's oldest and most beautiful concert hall, formerly the place of triumph of Beethoven, Brahms, Franz Liszt, and Gustav Mahler, and many other immortals, and still the home of the famous Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. The impending meeting with the great Hertzka, separated only by a few steps from that gold-studded abode of a brilliant past, made me feel faint as I trailed Pepi, who cheerfully entered Hertzka's privatissimum, brushing aside a bowing doorman and a powerless secretary.

Hertzka rose behind a tremendous desk, and when I say he rose I mean he *rose*. He was a man nobody who ever laid eyes on would ever forget. He was very tall. To say that he had whiskers wouldn't be enough. He looked like a man who for forty-five years had been too busy to go to the barber. His penetrating eyes flashed brilliantly out of a huge forest of gray hair that covered his head, face, and chest.

A gleam of unspeakable boredom shone in these eyes when he approached Simon. It became a smiling threat of murder when Pepi introduced me as a young man who he, Simon, thought was the right person to be trained by Hertzka to become a music publisher.

Hertzka explained to me patiently and with killing friendliness that there was absolutely no opening, that he had a young and capable assistant who could take care of everything—unless I was looking for a subordinate position, which was of course out of the question, con-

sidering the fact that I was a protégé of his dear friend Joseph Simon. "We could use you immediately to draw lines on paper," he said, and everybody laughed at the good joke. I would remember that joke later on! While he explained all this and while dear friend Joseph was given the brush-off, I looked at him. I began to understand why a man of such unusual and imposing appearance had become not only one of the central figures of the powerful new movement in music but at the same time the target of innumerable jokes and anecdotes.

Hertzka was generally known as Wotan, not only because he certainly looked like Wagner's hairy hero, but particularly because, like him, he was rumored never to keep his contracts. (I later found out that this was an infamous lie—but stories and jokes have a strange way of sticking. It goes like this: (a) A man has a beard like Wotan. (b) Wotan doesn't fulfill his contracts. (c) Therefore, the man with the beard doesn't fulfill his contracts. It's damn unfair—but there it is.)

While Wotan was his most popular name, many people just called him "God" or mistook him for Johannes Brahms. This happened time and again, and I myself was present when a young lady once rushed toward him after a performance of Brahms's Third Symphony in a little Austrian town.

"Master," she sighed, "Master, let me kiss you."

Hertzka let her kiss him all right, and by the time she had disentangled herself from his whiskers and found out that Brahms had been in his grave for twenty-nine years, it was too late to do anything about it.

After Hertzka had finished his speech and old Pepi, to his visible annoyance, had "glanced through the mail," we parted. Hertzka determined never to set eyes on me again and I even more solemnly resolved to get the job.

Soon the days in Vienna were over and I departed for Heidelberg to finish my studies. Having decided to become a music publisher, all this didn't mean much to me any more. I devoted a bare minimum of time to my books and a maximum to the most beautiful German baroness who ever entranced a law student on the flowery slopes and the icy ski trails of the Schwarzwald. Her name was—but what am I talking about!

Two years later a well-meaning professor handed me a degree of doctor of law and I was now free to inflict my services as a judge on humanity. Instead I drafted a wire to old Joseph Simon in Vienna:

JUST PASSED BAR EXAMINATION
SUMMA CUM LAUDE STOP AM NOW
READY TO COMMENCE JOB AT UNI-
VERSAL EDITION AS OFFERED BY
YOU STOP PLEASE ADVISE WHEN
I SHOULD START

DR HANS HEINSHEIMER

I went to the telegraph office. The man behind the window had whiskers, tremendous whiskers. For a moment I saw Hertzka and his dagger eyes. "It is hopeless," my evil spirit whispered. "Better save your money."

I didn't listen. I thrust the wire at the man. He smiled. It wasn't Hertzka after all.

The next afternoon I was on a train to Vienna.

What had happened? When Pepi had strolled into Hertzka's office with the usual "Good morning. What is new?" there *was* something new, for the first time in many, many months. Hertzka handed him a letter he had just received. His only assistant, "the young and capable man who could take care of everything," had tendered his resignation. He was going in business for himself. There was nobody to take his place. Triumphantlly Simon pulled the crumpled remains of my wire out of his pocket.

A few days later I entered the sacred realm of Universal Edition as Herr Doktor at a weekly salary of eight dollars. I was introduced to Fräulein Rothe, a stern-faced spinster, who gave me one pencil and told me that I would never get another one unless I surrendered the stub of this one. My first job was to help a beautiful blonde with an angel face draw lines on a large piece of paper.

I drew lines and looked at angel-face. The lines weren't straight.

I was a failure.

A Medal from the Empress

I HAD BEEN with Universal Edition for several months. My salary had been raised to ten dollars. I kept on returning pencil stubs to Fräulein Rothe. I made progress with the blonde—nice progress, to tell the truth—but I certainly didn't make any progress with Hertzka. While this state of affairs was in some ways pleasant and satisfactory and nicer than it would possibly have been the other way round, I began to think that maybe this was not all I had come to Vienna for. Nevertheless, for the time being I refused to be worried.

Hertzka was a great traveler. There was no première and no music festival in any corner of the continent where he would not be present. Wherever he went his arrival was eagerly expected and hailed by the assembled composers like the coming of the Messiah. He would at once take a seat in a front row and listen to the proceedings with obvious concentration and eager devotion. I never found out whether he really knew anything about music. There were many people who said he didn't and who kept on telling stories like the one of Hertzka listening

to a symphony, deeply submerged in a score he was holding.

"That's not it, Herr Direktor," a musician passing by said, taking the score gently out of his hand and turning it around. "You have to hold it the other way round."

It was at one of these occasions when the famous Hertzka jingle was born. I don't know who the great anonymous was who conceived it, but it became tremendously popular, and I am printing it here as a contribution to community singing around the American fireplace. The substitution of the word Hertzka by any name you like is permitted and even invited, and I myself made a great hit with it in Hollywood by replacing "old Hertzka" with "Sam Goldwyn."

However this might have been, he certainly had an amazing flair for people and a way of discovering traces of talent or genius where others didn't hear a thing. He would look more at the man and be impressed more by the personality than by the technicalities of a piece of music, and this gift made him a real discoverer and a great publisher.

The music festivals, organized all over Europe soon after World War I, were an abundant hunting ground for a man of such uncommon abilities. There was particularly the one in Donaueschingen, a tiny town in Germany at the spring of the Danube. This had been organized as early as 1921 and continued without interruption every year till 1926. These gatherings were financed and organized by Prince Max Egon of Fürstenberg, an elderly German nobleman who owned the whole

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "WHAT DID OLD HERTZ-KA EV-ER DO FOR ART OLD HERTZ-KA". The dynamic marking *mf* is present under the first measure.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass clef accompaniment provides harmonic support. The lyrics are: "WHO HAS AL-WAYS BEEN SO SMART. HE JUST MADE MON-EY TOOK IN THE".

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The melody and accompaniment continue. The lyrics are: "MON-EY, THAT'S ALL THAT HERTZ-KA EV-ER DID FOR ART HE JUST MADE". The dynamic marking *ff* (fortissimo) is present under the final measure.

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system. The melody and accompaniment continue. The lyrics are: "MON-EY, TOOK IN THE MON-EY, THAT'S ALL THAT HERTZ-KA EV-ER DID FOR ART." The system concludes with a final chord in the bass clef.

town. He was a good-looking man with iron-gray hair, a clipped mustache, and the swinging step and erect posture of one who had spent most of his life in the saddle. He had been an officer in a swanky German cavalry regiment and a great personal friend of Kaiser Wilhelm—and it was a strange twist of fate that this utterly unsophisticated country squire, whose occupation of a lifetime had been horses, women, and the scientific application of manure on his estate, became the patron of the most revolutionary movement in modern music.

This amazing transformation was caused by the fact that the prince—as was customary in princely circles—had his own band and church choir, and that these were presided over by a young, very ambitious conductor, a rugged-looking smallish German by the name of Heinrich Burkhardt.

This restless fellow was not content with conducting the *William Tell* Overture on the town square on Sunday afternoons. One day he had himself announced to the old prince and told him that now that the war had been lost and the old dreams of glory had to be shelved, there was only one thing to do: to show the world that Germany was, after all, leading in *Kultur* and musical progress. He reminded him of Joseph Haydn, who had once, under similar circumstances, lifted the obscure castle of Esterházy in Eisenstadt to a permanent place in musical history. He impressed upon the prince, who had only one wish—to be left alone and to go to sleep—that there was now, all over Europe, a mighty movement of new music bursting out like a spring flood and that he, the prince,

would become a European figure by serving as host and patron to these young composers, conductors, and performers.

The old prince, who had entertained Kaiser Wilhelm year after year during the imperial hunt on his grounds, who was lonesome and bored in his newly enforced solitude (the imperial guest was cutting wood across the border in Holland), and who was too tired anyway to resist, told him to go ahead. Modern music didn't mean a thing to him. If they could get a crowd again after all these dreary and lonesome years and some people to drink his champagne—why not give a music festival?

Burkhardt went to work without losing time. For his first program he commissioned such radical composers as Alban Berg, Ernst Krenek, Alois Haba, Paul Hindemith, and a dozen others who later achieved fame and success but at that time were young and unknown. To have their works performed before a splendid audience of conductors, pianists, music critics, artists, and publishers, all present at the invitation of the prince and all kept in a mood of hilarity by his lavish entertaining, was a start better than anything they could have hoped for.

These festivals had a peculiar and quite unique atmosphere. The little town was completely taken over by the guests who had arrived from many countries of Europe and even from America. Wherever you went you would meet long-haired, queerly dressed people who could be nothing on earth but musicians. There was no danger of mixing any of them up with the natives, who stared with amazement and thoroughly enjoyed all the extra hotel

rooms, meals, and drinks they sold to the crazy crowd of foreigners. The music festival was a forum of ideas hotly discussed in rathskellers and under the trees in the old park. It was a proving ground for new compositions and, quite appropriately, it was here that Alois Haba, the wild-eyed Czech, presented for the first time his experiments in quarter-tone music. It was also a county fair where publishers could peddle their wares to a reluctant though interested crowd of conductors and artists, and composers could sell their output to reluctant and mostly uninterested publishers. Every year you would find the same people at these festivals. They would first come to Donaueschingen and in later years turn up again at the International Festivals in Venice and Prague, in Warsaw and Siena, in Zürich, Vienna, Salzburg, Oxford, and Liège.

The old prince, perfect gentleman and polite host, would always be present. He would mingle smilingly with these long-haired people who came from all over the world, who didn't know the difference between a horse and a mule, and were deadly afraid even to look at the weapons which were proudly displayed in the big hall. During all the concerts he would sit in the first row in a chair that was covered with red velvet and displayed his elaborate and intriguing coat of arms. He would sit through string quartets and song cycles, through ear-piercing serenades for wind instruments and endless sonatas for violin solo. Never would he betray annoyance, fatigue, or horror. His mind probably was far away, back in the happier days when he was riding with Kaiser Bill, listening to the gayer music of hunting horns and barking

hounds. But nobody ever found out what he really thought.

It was at festivals like these that Hertzka would go around watching, listening, discussing, till at last he was ready to take a young, gasping composer out for lunch and to give him the third degree. Soon he knew more about him than the poor man had ever known about himself, and after that he either dropped him, never to look at him again, or he made him sign a contract.

I had watched him go on these trips time and again, had listened to his glowing reports when he came home, and admired the harvest of new contracts which he used to bring back. One of these days—sooner, not later—I would have to go on a trip myself. This, I felt—and the thought slowly became an obsession—was my only chance to prove to him that maybe I could do more than use up Fräulein Rothe's pencils and return the stubs.

That I finally succeeded was brought about by the following odd combination of facts:

(a) My parents had to decide to celebrate their silver wedding in Munich, which was halfway between Vienna and Berlin, on October 19, and they had to invite me to come and spend the day with them.

(b) Hertzka had to come down with a cold on October 20.

(c) The Berlin Staatsoper had to première a new opera by Ernst Krenek, one of Hertzka's latest discoveries, on October 21.

A Universal première without Whiskers was unthinkable. But he had a cold, and when I said good-by before

leaving for Munich I did some fast thinking. Maybe I could continue my journey and represent him at the opening night in Berlin?

To my surprise, Hertzka wasn't roaring with laughter. He just gave me a tired smile that made me feel like a mouse after it had just offered to carry a steel bar for an elephant. He said he would see how he felt tomorrow and let me know. I left for Munich, convinced that he would get to Berlin, if necessary, in an ambulance or a hearse. But the next day a telegram arrived: "Proceed to Berlin." His cold and my luck were holding.

I arrived in Berlin, and there was Ernst Krenek. Meeting this young, slender man, with an overflow of soft blond hair covering a square head that seemed too big for such a smallish body, was a revelation, almost a shock. I had met composers before, but only in the awe-inspiring presence of the great Hertzka and the solemn surroundings of Universal Edition. These composers were Hertzka's friends and would be introduced with pomp and circumstance. He would address them with "Master," "Dear Master Schoenberg," "My dear Master Bartók." They were remote, distant, something strange, living on quite a different level. You would approach them with a reverent bow and speak to them only with guarded tongue.

And now I was sitting here drinking beer with Ernst Krenek, whose opera was to be performed the same night at the State Opera. His name, his picture were in all the papers. Many of his works had been performed. The days might not be far when Hertzka would write him, "Dear Master."

But this fellow could have gone to school with me. He was just twenty-eight days older than I. He was born in 1900. So was I. So was Kurt Weill. So was Aaron Copland. So was George Antheil. And there were Paul Hindemith and Darius Milhaud and Honegger and Martinu: all people I had met in Donaueschingen and Salzburg, composers, artists, conductors, performers. They had all been boys when the Great War broke out. Now they were men. I had been a boy. Now I was a man.

While I was talking to Ernst it struck me all of a sudden that we were talking the same language, breathing the same air, smiling the same smiles. We had the same love, the same hate, the same dream. We would grow old together. One day we would be thirty, forty, fifty. One day we would both be old, and then younger men would feel that *we* were strange, remote, moving on a different level. But today we were pals. I felt that I understood him. He wasn't a "Master." He wasn't a customer. He was not a composer, and I was not a publisher. We were two fellows, twenty-four years young, and life was just beginning.

Now I understood that I had not entered this strange profession of a music publisher as one would become a banker or a shoe manufacturer. There were better and much easier ways to make a living. This was a vocation, not just a job. The good old happy world of 1913 had vanished, and it would never rise again. Here I was, just entering life, when a whole generation, *my* generation, was trying to build a new world. Would they succeed? Nobody knew. But wasn't it worth a lifetime to be with

them, help them, guide them, listen to them? What greater adventure could there be?

That October night in 1924 I was sitting with Ernst Krenek in a box of the Berlin opera house at the première of his *Zwingburg*. It was his first opera and it was my first première. I can still feel the excitement and the gripping tension. I still feel it because it has never changed. How many times have I gone through it since: the heartbeat, the expectation, the tense waiting of the alchemist: will the elements unite, will the formula succeed, will the mixture be right? But this time it was all new to me: the applause, the handshakes, the curtain calls, one, two, five, ten, the dinner, the speeches, the drinks, the congratulations. I had not yet learned to listen and to see. Applause was applause to me, and applause meant success. I listened to people congratulating Ernst. I had not learned to hear the little nuance that separates politeness from sincerity. But the next morning we had bad notices. Baron von Schillings, the director of the opera house, was doubtful whether he would be able to keep *Zwingburg* in the repertoire and he looked pleased when he said it. How could he be pleased? He had accepted the work; he was responsible for its production!

I was a beginner. I didn't know that Schillings, himself a composer of repute, hated modern music. I didn't know that he was the typical exponent of the German spirit of conservatism, nationalism, and nazism that was only slightly covered and that had already begun to show again through the shabby coat of democratic paint. I didn't know that we were to fight a losing battle for a

short decade and that this first experience would only be a symbol of things to come. It was all there in the newspaper to read and in the faces to discover. Only I couldn't see it.

Exhausted and happy, I returned to Vienna to report. My assignment had been to be a silent observer and nothing else. But I had certainly overstepped these orders. I had talked Baron von Schillings into signing a contract for a new ballet by Egon Wellesz, one of Hertzka's Viennese "Masters." I had promised the conductor Erich Kleiber the first performance of a new symphony which wasn't even conceived. I had gone all over the place. Now, while I was riding back on the night train, I thought of a famous medal that was created for the Austrian Army by the great Empress Maria Theresa and had been named in her honor. This medal was reserved for officers who had successfully *disobeyed* orders. If a man in the thick of battle felt that he should make his own decisions and proceed against orders, he knew that he was facing two possibilities: if he failed he would be shot at sunrise; if he succeeded he would get the medal.

I entered Hertzka's office prepared to be shot and ready to die as a man. But a great change had come over Wotan. It had been his first chance ever to stay away from a performance—and *he had enjoyed it*. He had nursed his cold in his nice, cozy house, he had spent an evening in an easy chair, he had had a neighbor over for a game of chess. He loved it and he loved me. He was delighted with my accomplishments. He sneezed, smiled, and handed me the medal: he put me in charge of the

opera department of Universal Edition, the biggest, most exciting, most wonderful job in the world. Angel-face was assigned to me as my secretary, somebody else was found to draw lines on paper, and stern orders were issued to Fräulein Rothe that I was to receive new pencils without surrendering the old ones. This made a deep impression on everybody in the organization.

But I had to take one final step to assure my position. I took seven pencil stubs and threw them out of the window.

Nobody dared to protest.

I was a success.

Who Pays the Piper?

TO THE VICTOR belong the spoils. To the champ, the laurel. To the success, an office of his own. This, then, was the next step on the road: an office for myself and blond angel-face to brighten it up.

From the streamlined, air-conditioned, glaring perfection of Manhattan; from offices teeming with crimson-nailed girls sipping with closed eyes messages from softly rotating dictaphones; from the silence of thick carpets, and from the muted snares of Western Union call boxes, it is difficult to remember the little hole which they gave me and which they proudly told me was to be my office. But it was all they had—and it was more than I had ever hoped for. I opened the door, squeezed myself in between an old roll-top desk and the dirty wall, sat down on a creaking chair—and pressed a button. In came angel-face. I was an executive.

The room was about as large and bright and comfortable as a prison cell. The window was just wide enough to make you realize the lack of light in the room. To complete the impression of involuntary confinement,

there was a round piece of glass set in the door. That piece of glass was not there for me to look out; it was there for Hertzka to peek in.

Everything in the roomette was covered with the venerable dust of tradition. The scrubwoman, a diminutive lady by the name of Poldi, who had definitely been absent when God had given out beauty, brains, and soap, looked at the dust that covered the office and particularly my desk with a reverent Beethoven-walked-here-for-heaven's-sake-don't-touch-it attitude. After I had waited patiently but in vain for many a day, one evening I drew a large PIG in bold, aggressive letters on the silvery film of dust on my desk. This, I naïvely thought, would tell her. When I returned the next morning nothing had happened. Later I found out that she had thought this inscription to be a memo, and who was she to interfere with important notes on the desk of the new head of the opera department of the great Universal Edition!

The walls of the place were painted in that yellow-gray which has always been the depressing color of magistrates' courts, hospital walls, and railroad lavatories. Any attempt to give them a friendlier or, for that matter, just *any* new coat of paint would have been branded as a brazen and revolutionary idea, obviously unthinkable.

But as the years passed by these dreary walls began slowly to disappear behind a growing cover of trophies, behind an inspiring gallery of pin-up girls, the peculiar and beloved sort of pin-ups I liked to have around me.

My Joans and Ellens and Dorothys were posters heralding performances of new operas and plays and

ballets from all over the world. Month after month another souvenir went up as a colorful tapestry, a goblin woven of my own memories and telling strange and exciting stories. When I looked around I could read these stories in huge announcements from the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, printed in the gay letters and with the unworried waste of paper of the distant New World. There were crudely made-up Russian posters on grayish cardboard from Leningrad, Moscow, Tiflis, Baku, and Kiev which I had learned to decipher and liked to read to admiring visitors. There were posters in Czech, Hungarian, and Polish. There was a reserved and dull-looking announcement from Covent Garden in London, a flashy green-white-red poster from the Scala in Milan, Swedish programs from Stockholm and Göteborg, a strange-looking streamer from Helsinki, and elaborate old-fashioned *affiches* from the Paris Opéra and from the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels.

But most of them were in German.

Germany at this point had developed and organized a most elaborate and efficient system of operatic production. To look back at it today is like recounting a fairy tale from another star, not like remembering something that happened and was alive only some twenty years ago. If you still have around the house one of these shockingly outdated maps from the old prewar McNally, get it out for a moment and open the page "Germany." What you look at is an area much smaller than the state of

Texas. But on these 180,000 square miles there were more than a hundred opera houses.

These opera houses were operated for a full season of eight to ten months, year after year. They had, all hundred of them, their own conductors, stage managers, and designers, and they had all the singers and actors necessary to give a full season without calling in any guests from the outside. They had everything they needed down to their own carpenters, tailors, and wigmakers. These people, hundreds of them, would assemble year after year, and with Prussian regularity and determination they would begin their rehearsals, starting performances early in September and continuing till the end of June. They played everything—operas, ballets, comedies, dramas, shows, and operettas—night after night and on many afternoons, for ten months, three hundred days in succession.

How was this possible? It was possible only because it was based on the principle of public support and subsidy of music.

This had been an old practice in many countries of Europe and went back to the time when the emperors and kings began to take an active interest in the arts and when they set out to hire their performers and composers just as they had before hired grooms and jesters, valets and hunters, and the fellow who had to carry the hot-water bottle in the royal bedchamber. The King of France and the Emperor of Austria had started it, but Germany was to become the place where this system developed into an amazing and almost incredible boom.

The territory of Germany, a few hundred years ago, was ruled by hundreds of kings and princes and grand dukes and dukes and counts and barons, all over its width and length. What the "Roi Soleil," the great King of France, in his beautiful Paris, or His Imperial Majesty in Vienna would do, the kings and princes and grand dukes and dukes and counts and barons, all down the line, would try at once to imitate.

There were quite a few among them who got involved in all this because they really cared for music and art. But many of them did it only because the other fellow did it.

It has become fashionable to support an orchestra and an opera? All right, let's build an opera house, let's hire musicians and singers, let's commission composers, let's be a patron of the arts. The Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who was nothing but a country bum who knew a lot about pigs and turnips but certainly did not know how to spell, could never tolerate being outshined by the Count of Reitz-Schleitz-Kratzenstein, a miserable parvenu and upstart who thought that he would impress the world by building an opera house in the stinking village he had the audacity to call his capital. What Reitz-Schleitz-Kratzenstein could do, Mecklenburg-Strelitz could do any day of the year—and bigger and better. A few thousand pigs were slaughtered and a few hundred of the dukes' humble subjects sold to France or England for military service, and up went the opera house in Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

There was of course one more attraction that helped

to succor and sustain the princely ardor in support of music: what nicer, what easier way was there to get the prettiest dancers from Italy and Spain and the most beautiful singers from France and Russia within easy reach of the royal, ducal, or even imperial bedrooms? Generations of Hapsburg princes and German counts got their education in sex in the dressing rooms of the paternally sponsored ballet schools and opera houses.

Thus, out of ambition, spite, and sex, and here and there the playful interest of the amateur in matters of art, favors and money were lavished on an ever-expanding organization of orchestras and theaters all over Germany.

Developments in Berlin were typical of what happened all over the continent of Europe. It was Frederick the Great who had, in 1740, given Berlin its first opera house. Whenever he had a little time between his bloody wars of conquest, and after having invaded other people's countries, burned their towns, devastated their countryside, and killed as many of them as behooved the glory of Greater Prussia, the King would return to his lovely residence in Potsdam, wipe the blood off his boots and the cries of the tortured from his ears, call for his French dressing gown and a pair of slippers, and proceed at once to establish for himself a brilliant reputation in the history books as a patron of the arts, a composer of repute, and—of all things—a flute player.

He must have been in one of these moods when he decided graciously to spend one million thalers of his subjects' money for an opera house in Berlin. The people

were permitted to pay (and taxes were collected with incredible brutality), but there ended any part they ever had in the royal undertaking. They were permitted to pay, but they were not permitted to go to the opera. It was to be a strictly private affair for the King, the King's court, and the King's coterie.

The seats for the new opera house were given out on royal invitation only. Seats in the orchestra were reserved for the members of the court and for the generals and other high officers of the Army. The boxes and the balcony were given over to members of the nobility and to "distinguished foreigners" at the King's discretion. Tickets were not for sale.

But, strange as it seems, there must have been a hot black market in tickets even in those bygone days, because the King put a high penalty on the sale of them. The black marketeers who peddled them under the linden trees were apprehended and probably hanged at a royal lamppost just across the square from the opera house. Shocked and indignant, their offspring boarded the next ship and left for America, here to become the ancestors of the sullen-faced men who hang around the Metropolitan Opera House and Carnegie Hall in New York at curtain time and buttonhole you with a muffled "What about a couple of orchestra seats, bud?" before they dissolve into thin air at the approach of a cop.

Almost all the operas performed were written by the King's court composer, a man by the name of Karl Heinrich Graun. He wrote not less than twenty-six operas, most of them on subjects taken from Greek and Roman

ancient history, but one already daringly penetrating into American surroundings and entitled *Montezuma*.

I have often marveled at the wonderful life this Graun must have led. There he was on the King's payroll, getting a couple of hundred thalers year after year, which was all he ever needed, and all he had to do was to write an opera or two a year. He did not have to shop around for somebody to publish or perform them. He did not have to worry about success or failure. Nobody would ever dare to dislike what the King's composer had conceived, written, performed, produced, and directed so long as the King liked it—and the King did. Which composer of our time enjoys similar privileges, appreciation, and protection?

Frederick the Great had given orders to engage an orchestra of forty men for the Berlin Opera House. This was lavish, considering the modest size of the scores of that period, but there was a good reason for it. The King of Saxony, who had built an opera house in Dresden and had got quite some publicity out of it, had an orchestra of thirty-eight. It had been the best and the biggest in Europe. The forty men in Berlin were not really needed, but they certainly served their purpose of telling the King of Saxony where he belonged—in Saxony.

The successors of the great Frederick had to give in reluctantly to the proletarian trend of the times and had to admit the ordinary people, the everyday taxpayers, to the opera. But it still remained a private enterprise of the King, as were his stables, kitchens, or china factories. The men in command of the opera were appointed by the

King, and nobody bothered to ask much for their ability or experience. A prince or count who had failed in the administration of the royal stables, kitchens, or china factories and who was entitled for reasons of rank or influence (or because he had married the right girl) to some prominent job was made manager of the royal opera house. All that was required of him were good manners, a good tailor, and a first-class family tree. He was expected to *do* everything to maintain the opera house as a gathering place for well-dressed people, preponderantly in uniform, and to *avoid* everything in the repertoire and the style of production that would ever shock this audience out of their complacency or upset their tried-out traditions.

Kaiser Wilhelm, who took over the throne and the opera house in 1888, fancied himself a frustrated artist and began at once to horrify everybody by taking an active part in the policy and even in the productions of the opera house. His devastating taste is clearly reflected for anybody who wants to see it in the atrocious buildings and terrifying monuments with which he studded Berlin. The last war wiped out most of it, mercifully. His Lohengrinian dreams of a Teutonic style became the guiding spirit of the opera house. Like the mustached house painter who would take over a few years later, Wilhelm himself supervised new productions, designed new costumes and scenery, and allotted money lavishly for super-colossal productions, symbols of his super-colossal dreams of empire and world domination. New operas, new ideas, anything new would be taboo, unless

it would fit in with Kaiser Wilhelm's conception of German art.

And then came 1918 and came the revolution. Wilhelm, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia by the grace of God, went to Holland, grew a beard, and chopped wood to the end of his earthly days. The King of Saxony, descendant of the one Frederick the Great had snubbed with his forty-man orchestra, bade a laconic farewell to his subjects, and all the way down to the Count of Reitz-Schleitz-Kratzenstein, the kings and princes and dukes proceeded to exchange their crowns and helmets for top hats and derbies. Royalty went into retirement. It was a retirement on nice fat pensions, as was only natural in an orderly German revolution, and the pensions were enough to pay for mansions, servants, and cars and enough to pay dues to the Nazi party, which had just begun to rise. But they weren't enough to pay for deficits in opera houses and orchestras.

In those centuries past, however, the people, the taxpayers, the ordinary man, had become accustomed to having their theaters in their towns. Now they discovered that these theaters had become an essential part of their lives. There could never be any question of parting from them now just because the royal sponsor had been forced to take a prolonged leave of absence. If the monarch could not support and maintain their theater any more, the people would have to do it themselves. It had been their money anyway—so it really did not make much difference. The state, the counties, the cities, and the towns went into the opera business as sponsors, supporters,

and organizers. Stern-faced, unsmiling city counselors and bullnecked representatives began to vote funds.

The money given by the public hand to these orchestras and theaters was not a guarantee subscribed to just in case it would be needed, or an endowment fund, or a loan. It was an *outright gift*, a contribution, a public subsidy. Almost sixty million marks were spent on the support of music by the federal government, the states, and the communities in Germany within a single year. This was about fifteen million dollars at the official exchange rate, but it meant more than twice as much if you consider what that money could buy in salaries and new productions.

With this money the Germans bought themselves more than one hundred symphony orchestras and more than one hundred theaters, with operas and ballets and plays and with hundreds of conductors and thousands of singers and actors.

The German setup was by far the biggest and the most conspicuous, but the principle that music was to be taken care of by the people was by no means confined to the territory of Germany. It had been accepted (and still is) throughout Europe. One of the basic reasons for the superb quality of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra was the fact that its members were employed by the state and had the status of civil servants. They couldn't be fired unless they took a pot shot at the Emperor (which happened rarely) or began to live publicly in sin (which happened frequently), and if they were old or incapacitated they would be retired on a nice pension and would

remain Herr Professor and an honored former "Philharmoniker" to the end of their earthly days. After the first war and now again after World War II, Austria was left in a state of utter poverty and general breakdown, but the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra was kept intact and its existence never questioned by a people who had to forage for the barest necessities of daily life. It was considered one of the most valuable assets of the nation and treated accordingly.

Even Great Britain, which always adhered closely to the system of separation of arts and state, has recently smashed a tradition of eight hundred years and made an important step in a new direction. Before the last war London's Covent Garden Opera had been a swanky and exclusive affair. Its productions were put on mainly for the privileged classes who could afford the high prices and who were admitted to the boxes and orchestra only if they appeared in formal evening dress. They were shown a short season of German, Italian, and French operas in the late spring and early summer, when the great stars had ended their engagements in those countries and at the Met and had time to come to London for a few weeks. All this was completely changed after the war. Covent Garden, the only opera house in the world which is surrounded on three sides by the sights and smells of a huge vegetable market and on the fourth by the dreary walls of an old police station, became for the first time in its history an opera house for the people. A trust fund took over, a strictly non-commercial, non-profit-making, and not even profit-searching organization, and the

government subsidized the new venture with sixty-thousand pounds in cash. An all-year-round season of opera and ballet, opera in English and ballet produced and danced by Englishmen, was presented to the people at prices they could afford. In addition to the sixty-thousand-pound subsidy, the British Government freed the theater from entertainment tax, which meant that it gave them an additional forty percent of the take as an indirect subsidy. This entirely new manifestation of a changed attitude toward music impressed the London City Council so much that they decided to give a grant of ten thousand pounds to the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

All this happened only as late as 1946. It was an important step and it meant that even conservative Great Britain was now slowly giving in to a trend which they just couldn't ignore any more.

In France, Belgium, Scandinavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland theaters and orchestras are all maintained and subsidized by the state or the communities, and even very small and very poor countries such as Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and even Latvia have their national opera houses and symphony orchestras.

I remember how one day a voluminous registered letter arrived in Vienna. It contained an invitation from the Latvian Government and a round-trip ticket, Vienna–Riga, and asked for the presence of a representative of the mighty Universal Edition at the first performance of an opera, *Hamlet*, by a native composer of Latvia at the opera house in Riga. Hertzka took one look at the

map and had already decided that this was a wonderful opportunity for me to see the world. I traveled forty-eight hours to Riga, heard the opera, *Hamlet*, drank innumerable toasts and barrels of vodka with the composer, the conductor, the Minister of Education, and almost every citizen of Riga, till we were all brethren and loved each other and the good people were so happy that they forgot completely to ask me how I had liked *Hamlet*. This saved me from telling a terrible lie to a composer, a conductor, and a Minister of Education in the beautiful city of Riga.

7.

Nightingales of the Desert

WHENEVER I travel through the vast territory of America I have to think back to little Latvia, a country of only two million people, but a country which thought enough of music to maintain at the expense of the taxpayer a national opera house and a national orchestra, and which thought so much of a new opera by one of its native composers that it invited people from all over Europe to be present at its first performance. Opera is a luxury. To try to make it pay leads to the type of production and repertoire which has become the trade-mark of most professional opera companies in America. A balanced budget means that you can never give a new composer a chance by investing time and money in anything but the old war horses. Opera thus becomes a commercial undertaking which has about as much to do with the cultural life and development of a people as a successful sale of men's suits. Any creative production of opera and any attempt to maintain a high artistic level of presentation and to experiment with new and untried scores inevitably lead to a deficit, even if every performance is sold out.

The United States is the only country that has not yet accepted the idea that music is the concern of the community and that deficits in music have to be paid by the community just as those in schools, sea lions, museums, sewer systems, libraries, policemen, botanical gardens, and the statue of Calvin R. Courtwright, citizen, soldier, statesman, at Main Street and Seventh. Within the short time of one generation the United States has become the greatest music-producing and music-consuming country in the world, but it is still handling the organization and the financing of its huge musical enterprises in covered-wagon fashion. Music in America still relies entirely on charity. The hat is passed around from year to year, and everybody hopes that the hat will not return empty. Only a few symphony orchestras in America have a small subsidy from their cities and there are some isolated cases of small subsidies by states. The so-called City Center for Music and Drama in New York got nothing but an old building from the city, a building which fell to the city because the owners could no longer pay the taxes and for which there was no other use. Otherwise the City Center is far from being a civic undertaking. It has either to be completely self-supporting or to rely on private donations.

Such a system was well in place at a time when musical entertainment was a strictly commercial venture, when slick impresarios would import artists from abroad, and when Americans took as much interest in them as in any Barnum and Bailey show or in the ring of the planet Saturn, which people could see for a dime through a

telescope on Forty-second Street. The people looked, paid, and went away. Saturn was far, and the next bar was near.

But today millions of Americans have become music-conscious as never before. The era of the Barnums and the Baileys is fading away. America today is producing a greater wealth of talent than ever before in its history. Wherever you go you will see and hear an abundance of young singers and composers, conductors and players, and people in every other branch of the musical profession. For thousands of them and for the whole future of a genuine musical culture in America the question of *decentralization* and *decommercialization* of art and music in America is not a paper question to be discussed by professors over a round table. To them it is a very vital question, and that is why I should like to dedicate these stories to all these unheard nightingales of the desert. I should like to dedicate them to every young man or woman who could be a great opera singer but only sings in a glee club and in church on Sunday morning, to every American who could be a conductor and has to be in the insurance business, and to a young fellow I met who might be the world's greatest stage designer but has to make a living as a carpenter's apprentice—for lack of opportunities.

Let us dream for a moment, and in dreaming forget that lack of opportunities. Let us dream of a make-believe world that has the wealth and the abundance of opportunities that one day will be here, in the greatest, the

richest, the most abundant country in the world. Close your eyes and dream.

Can you hear me?

You are now a graduate from a conductor's class at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

Keep your eyes closed. This is no reality. You are dreaming.

Now get up. This door here leads to the office of Dr. Howard Hanson, president of Eastman School. Knock at that door.

"Come in," says Dr. Hanson.

Go ahead. Keep your eyes closed. Enter. Talk.

"Dr. Hanson," you say, "I think that I have learned everything that a young conductor can learn in school. There is nothing you still can give me. What I need now is practical training. I want a job where I can get all that training and I came to ask for your help and advice."

Hanson smiles. It is a dream and Hanson smiles.

"My dear boy," he says, "nothing could be easier."

He gets up and goes over to his desk and takes out a bulky file.

"Here are letters from many American opera houses," he says. "They are all looking for a young conductor with your background and your training. Would you like to go to the Municipal Opera in Seattle or to the Civic Theater in Milwaukee? Here are letters from the Georgia State Opera in Atlanta, from Albany and Dallas and Baltimore. They all will be glad to have you. Just pick one."

So you go on dreaming and pick the Civic Theater in Milwaukee.

For ten months you coach singers and train the chorus and sit behind the conductor at rehearsals, watching his every move and bringing him ham sandwiches and Coca-Colas during the interval. And as the weeks and months pass by you learn to know every bar in *Traviata* and in the *Barber of Seville* and in *Porgy and Bess*, so that you could sing the scores from beginning to end if they woke you up at four o'clock in the morning.

Then one day arrives that supreme moment in your life, that forever-unforgettable Wednesday afternoon when they let you conduct *The Merry Widow* for the first time.

On Thursday morning you go back to your routine, to your coaching and to your chorus, but the next time when you bring him the ham sandwiches the conductor will ask you if you don't want one for yourself. This is the turning point. Your career has begun.

The next year you leave Milwaukee. It has given you all it could. You are now twenty years old and you go as a second conductor to the opera house in Buffalo.

Your first assignment is to conduct a performance of *Rigoletto* on a Saturday night. It is a popular night at half prices and there are lots of students and soldiers with their girls in the audience. You conduct without a rehearsal—but what does it matter?—you are conducting an operatic performance! You learn how to look at fifty people on the stage so that they look back at you and know that you are the boss. The tenor misses a cue, the

chorus is four bars behind the orchestra, but you manage to lead them back to where they belong, and nobody in the audience has noticed a thing. You learn how to watch that second trumpet player with one eye and that fat woman in the chorus who always sings out of tune with the other.

As the year goes by you become slowly but surely master of a hundred tricks. You lose your nervousness. Everything becomes second nature.

It is just like driving a car for the first twenty thousand miles. You have learned all about driving a car in school. You have passed all your tests and you have passed them with flying colors. But now get in that car and drive down Lexington Avenue. You drive four blocks and then bump into a taxi. It is a brand-new taxi. It *was* a brand-new taxi.

What you need and what no school and no test can give you is finding out for yourself: experience. Howard Hanson told you all that is in the books. But he could not provide you with these twenty thousand miles of driving. That is why you will forever gratefully remember *The Merry Widow* in Milwaukee and *Rigoletto* in Buffalo.

And now awake. The dream is over! Open your eyes and return to the land of the living.

Awake and go and ask the real Dr. Howard Hanson at Eastman School in Rochester, New York, what you, a young American conductor, should do.

"There is only one thing you can do," Howard Hanson says. His dream smile is gone. He looks sullen and

disappointed. "Go to New York and see Arthur Judson."

And what will the great impresario tell you?

Arthur Judson will tell you that he has eighty-seven conductors on his waiting list.

If you are unlucky he will put you on as number eighty-eight.

If you are lucky he will throw you out.

There will always be a Fuller Brush Company.

If the fate of a conductor in America is sad and his path to glory studded with embarrassed smiles, questionnaires, and letters of sincere regret, the career of an American singer is nothing but a tragic epic.

Hollywood has presented us with a pattern of a singer's rise to glory which surpasses in its vicious distortion of the truth anything ever attempted by Make-Believe Land. The story has been filmed again and again and has given millions of people who have no way of checking it the idea that a singer, particularly a female, has only to be young, poor, and an imposing, irritating brat to be propelled overnight into fame, money, and the permanent pursuit of happiness. It goes like this:

Benvenuto Annunciata, a poor but honest Italian immigrant, owns a little Pizzeria in Westport, Connecticut. It is a lovely morning. The birds are singing and the trees are blooming as Benvenuto locks up his spaghetti kitchen and proceeds to a little church around the corner. With him is his wife Maria and his son Victor, a slickish-looking young man whose tailor-made clothes

and little mustache fit ill in these happy surroundings and clearly indicate that there is going to be trouble with Victor.

The choir begins to sing. Soon a lovely voice rises like a silver bird over the grayish flood of sound and fills the church with beauty and Mama Annunciata's eyes with tears. Who can it be but Gloria, Gloria Annunciata, the daughter of these good people, the sister of the bad Victor, and does she sing beautiful!

Let that camera slide slowly over the congregation, a nodding, smiling, weeping congregation, and then let it climb up to the balcony for a first close-up of Gloria.

But not even Gloria's angel voice can hold Victor. He sneaks out of the church and departs for New York, and from the way he puts his handkerchief in his breast pocket you know that there is going to be trouble with Victor.

Let us now skip a few reels and get right into a harmless evening of fun and merrymaking. The Pizzeria is filled with drinking, singing, smoking guests. Papa is handing out wine and Mama is fishing tremendous heaps of spaghetti out of tremendous pots. There is music: a guitar player and a fiddler. Gloria, of course, sings. She sings "O Sole Mio," and for some reason or other that miserable guitar player and lonely fiddler all of a sudden sound like the augmented and heavily reinforced Philharmonic Orchestra. Again let that camera wander over the room—the spellbound guests, the dropping tears, the steaming spaghetti—till at last that camera takes a good long rest on Gloria. Shouts, bravoos, Mama kisses her bambina. Gloria is going to sing an encore, but—hold everything—there is the telephone. Cling, cling, cling.

Pop takes it, and who is on the other end but Victor, and he needs three thousand dollars by tomorrow night or it's jail for him and disgrace and headlines.

Cut that music out, man, there's only \$11.32 in the cash register. Poor Mama, look at her now, crying and mumbling, "My boy, my bambino." The guests, obviously afraid that there will be a collection, evaporate hastily through the next exit, and only Gloria is still there. This is when she sings that lovely "Sleep now, Mama mia, tomorrow will be another day," with orchestra and harps and the sobs of a solo violin. Papa leads Mama away. Gloria hesitates for a moment and then her decision is made. Cling, snap, she takes the \$11.32 from the cash register and tiptoes out of the room, and there is the night train to Boston and the next thing you see is her sneaking into a large building marked "Symphony Hall" and settling down in a seat in the second balcony for a sound sleep.

She is awakened by music. It's a bright morning, and on the stage the Boston Symphony Orchestra is rehearsing under Serge Koussevitzky himself. There is a brisk step, and in comes José Iturbi and begins to pound out the Piano Concerto by Tchaikovsky in all its glory and majesty.

But what is this? Pain distorts Iturbi's face, he seems to falter, he interrupts. Koussevitzky knocks his baton on his stand and the music stops. They begin again, but again Iturbi has to give up. "Something is wrong with my arm," he moans. He clenches his teeth for a third attempt, but before he reaches the second bar of the famous tune he has to stop. *But the music does not stop.*

An angel's soprano voice has taken over where Iturbi had to give up. Koussevitzky turns around with an amazed and enchanted expression, searching all over the hall for that voice while he keeps on conducting the orchestra. And there she is, there is Gloria Annunciata, now standing high up in the balcony, holding onto the rail and singing "Tonight We Love."

Iturbi jumps up. He rushes up the stairs and leads Gloria down while she keeps on singing, and when she at last enters the stage, the beautiful music and the orchestra and Gloria's voice and old man Koussevitzky just nodding his head and waving that baton make your spine shiver and your eyes very, very wet.

The next night she sings the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto with Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It's a great night. In a box sits Iturbi with Mama and Papa and Victor, who got his three thousand dollars in a personal check from Koussevitzky. "The doctor says I will be all right tomorrow," says Iturbi to Papa, "but I am happy I cannot play tonight. A star is born." And Papa and Mama just sit and smile. There is a close-up of their smiles and a close-up of Gloria and a close-up of Koussevitzky and a close-up of Victor taking Iturbi's watch. And then Gloria sings again "Tonight We Love," and Victor breaks down and returns Iturbi's watch, and Iturbi takes it and does not say a word and just pats Victor on the shoulder and hands him a handkerchief.

The picture ends with Gloria signing contracts with the Metropolitan Opera, the Telephone Hour, the Columbia Recording Company, with S. Hurok Presents,

and with the United States Navy for an extended series of ship christenings.

This story is told by Hollywood to millions of innocent and defenseless people year after year. Let us now proceed to the less glamorous surroundings of New York City to be present at a *real*, everyday encounter between the real Miss Annunciata and Fame. You are invited to attend an audition.

It is difficult to understand how a country that has successfully suppressed the burning of witches at the stake and the public sale of slaves, a country that does not even let you take a young lady you know to New Jersey without threatening you with unpleasant consequences, stands idly by while its young citizens of both sexes are exposed to the cruelties and indignities of public auditions.

Auditions usually take place in smallish, depressing, and overheated studios. The air is filled with fragments of scales—fiddled scales, sung scales, scales 'hammered on pianos—penetrating the thin walls from all directions and joining in a wild and never-ending cacophony. There is a small podium in the studio with a piano whose keys are a dirty brown. There are a few creaking folding chairs; there are cigarette butts and shreds of paper all over the place, and there is very little light.

Sir Thomas Beecham is uncomfortably propped up in one of the folding chairs. Next to him sits an assistant with a list, a notebook, and a pencil. It is ten o'clock in the morning. Sir Thomas Beecham is ill-tempered at this hour. The assistant, eager to please the boss, gives

his own face an irritated look. He smokes a pipe. The smoke drifts toward the podium and settles down, heavy and blue.

The assistant looks at his list, Sir Thomas Beecham nods, and the assistant calls out in a yelling, unpleasant voice:

“Miss Annunciata.”

A little door opens, and in comes Miss Annunciata.

She has been waiting next door for forty-three tormented minutes. She has shared the sticky air with a dozen other candidates. They all know one another; they went through this together before; they are nice kids and they still like one another. In charge of them are half a dozen concert agents. The agents also all know one another. But they all hate one another.

One of the singers in that waiting room is Miss Black. Miss Black is a bad singer. Her agent knows that she will never please Sir Thomas Beecham. He knows that she does not have the slightest chance to be engaged by him. But he brought her here because Miss Black's husband pays the agent a retainer. And the agent wants to keep that retainer and get another retainer after this one expires in March. He will never provide an engagement for her and he knew it when he first signed her up. So he provides auditions. The next time Miss Black's husband becomes restless the agent will remind him that he arranged an audition with the great Sir Thomas Beecham. This is the reason why Miss Black is here today. Miss Annunciata knows it. Everybody knows it. Only Miss Black does not know it.

So this is the great Sir Thomas Beecham, thinks Miss Annunciata while she takes the twelve fatal steps across the podium. She knows that she has exactly eight minutes. She has prepared these eight minutes in weeks of hard work. She had to pay for the lessons. She has to pay for the old lady in the silly straw hat and pince-nez who comes with her to the podium and takes her seat at the piano.

Miss Annunciata looks straight at Sir Thomas Beecham. While she forces a smile on her weary lips she keeps on thinking. He does not like American singers, she thinks. He does not like Italian-American singers. He does not like singers, period. If I smile he will think I want to make up to him. If I don't smile he will think I am a sourpuss. If I act with assurance he will think I am a prima donna. If I show concern he will think I am a greenhorn. But it really doesn't matter. I cannot sing at ten-thirty in the morning. I'll never get the job.

"What would you like to sing for us?" says the great Beecham.

He is rather nice, thinks Miss Annunciata with a sudden ray of hope. He is human. He talks to me. She feels better.

"I would like to sing for you——"

"I tell you what I would like you to sing," cuts in the nice human Sir Thomas. "I would like to hear the aria from Massenet's *Werther*." Miss Annunciata feels her heart sagging. Out goes the ray of hope. She and the nice lady in the straw hat had carried seventeen scores on the stage. She is ready to sing seventeen different parts

and fifty-two songs. But she does not know Massenet's *Werther*.

"I am afraid," she says with a dying smile, "I am not quite ready with the part. I studied it, of course, but I would rather sing something else."

"Oh, it does not really matter," says the human Sir Thomas. "Sing anything you like!"

His voice does not sound nice any more, thinks Miss Annunciata. Three of her eight minutes have already ticked away. Why didn't I learn *Werther*? Why didn't I? Too late.

And so she sings the "Habañera" from *Carmen*. She is the twenty-first girl to sing the "Habañera" from *Carmen* for Sir Thomas Beecham in the last two days. She sings and she walks around on that stage, making love to a Don José who isn't there and chewing a rose that isn't there either. The old lady hammers on the piano. The assistant yawns and blows smoke on the stage.

"Thank you, thank you very much," says Sir Thomas Beecham just as she opens her frightened little mouth for the final *amour*. Miss Annunciata stops. She tries to smile. She takes her music. The old lady gets up. They march out.

And while Miss Annunciata goes through the door she can hear the assistant yelling with the creaking voice of doom:

"Next, please. Mr. O'Shea. What would you like to sing for us?"

Miss Annunciata will go through this many times till at last she realizes that it won't get her anywhere. So one

day she goes and sees Mr. Wallace E. Stone, concert manager in Manhattan. Mr. Stone will first keep her waiting for half an hour while his secretary puts on a magnificent show for Miss Annunciata, burning up the switchboard with an overwhelming barrage of incoming and outgoing calls. Yes, Mr. Stone. No, Mr. Stone. I tried to get Hollywood for you, but the circuits are busy. Jascha says he will be here at three. Sorry, miss, to keep you waiting, but Mr. Stone is still on the phone with Dimitri—I mean Mr. Mitropoulos.

When Miss Annunciata leaves Mr. Stone an hour later she understands that an artist cannot drift for himself but needs a manager to do the drifting for him. She will understand that the management of artists is an expensive undertaking and that she has to be very grateful that a man as busy and as successful as Mr. Wallace E. Stone takes an interest in her little self. She is happy that he has consented to manage her for the next two years if she only will write home and get a check for \$2,400 made out to Mr. Stone to cover part of his promotional expenses “and for all the traveling I will have to do for you,” and will she please ask Papa for an additional \$300 for a beautiful four-page folder with her picture and her life story? And how many engagements will I have? Mr. Stone smiles the benevolent smile of the expert. Will she please leave everything to him? It’s going to be all right.

Oh yes, there is just one more item. She has, of course, to give a Town Hall recital in New York. “I can’t possibly sell you on your press reviews from Westport and

Wichita Falls," he chuckles. "What you need, my dear, is New York press, and then you will see things are going to happen."

Miss Annunciata says she sees and what would it cost and Mr. Stone hands her a printed slip of paper headed "Estimated Budget of Expense for Town Hall" and Miss Annunciata goes home and writes to Dad. Dad loves his little darling very much and he calls up the bank and talks to Mr. Sullivan and the next day he sends the \$2,400 for Mr. Stone and the \$300 for the folder and the pictures and \$966.44 for the Town Hall recital. One hundred and twenty-five dollars of that goes to Stone, \$350 to the Hall, and the rest goes to advertising and posters and three-sheets and tickets and printing and moving the piano and tuning the piano and miscellaneous and sending a fellow to the Russian Tea Room with leaflets and programs and coupons for free tickets.

Miss Annunciata throws out the nice old lady with the funny hat and gets herself a fashionable accompanist ("I need another \$150, Dad, but the man is *so* famous") and soon she reads in the *New York Times*:

WALLACE E. STONE

PRESENTS

GLORIA ANNUNCIATA

SOPRANO

At the piano Allan Blank

TOWN HALL, WEDNESDAY, AT 8:40

She cuts it out and sends it home. It's the first return on Papa's checks, and Mama pastes it with loving hands in a brand-new scrapbook.

When the lights are dimmed at Town Hall on Wednesday at eight-forty a miracle has happened. Gloria Annunciata, a singer entirely unknown to the people of New York, has mysteriously attracted an audience of more than a thousand people. Why are they here? They all are here because Mr. Wallace E. Stone has a wonderful mailing list and a well-oiled machine to make it work. Veterans came from their hospitals, sailors from their ships, old ladies from their homes, kids from colleges and music clubs, members from their clubs, eighty-one secretaries, and forty-three clerks from the National City Bank. Each of them costs Papa thirty cents in federal tax, but it's a beautiful sight, and when he sees them filing in and filling the Hall he thinks they are lovely people and a cheap buy for \$300.

The boxes, of course, the twenty-six boxes, are filled with the family and their friends, and only one box remains empty throughout the whole evening. It is the box reserved for Mr. Wallace E. Stone.

Miss Annunciata comes out on the stage and gets a wonderful reception. She smiles and bows and puts the roses she brought with her on the piano. She nods to Allan Blank and opens her pretty little mouth, and there goes the "Largo" by Handel. Mama is pale and happy and Papa clears his throat. Little Gloria Annunciata from Westport, Connecticut, stands on the stage of Town

Hall in the big city of New York and sings for one thousand people!

But Miss Annunciata does not sing for these thousand people at all. She sings for only seven men down in the impenetrable dimness of the Hall. Whether these seven men come early or late, whether they stay or leave, whether they like it or get bored, whether they are in a good or in a bad mood will decide Miss Annunciata's fate. These seven men are the music critics of New York.

No matter how much Papa and Mama and brother Victor and the nice old ladies from the home in the Bronx applaud, these seven men and nobody else will decide whether the next morning Mr. Wallace E. Stone will shrug his shoulders and say sorry and maybe you try another recital next year, or whether Colossal Concerts, Inc., will send a messenger to Miss Annunciata and would she please come and have a chat and don't bother with Stone any more, we have already taken care of him.

Town Hall in New York sees almost one hundred recitals of debutantes every year. With the tremendous growth of American talent, the number of these debuts increases year after year. The New York concert mill used to begin to grind late in October and stopped its wheels in April. Now the stones begin to move early in September and are still going clatter, clatter, clatter by the end of May.

There are only a few of all these singers and fiddlers and pianists who make the grade, simply because "the grade" means only a few things: it means the Metro-

politan Opera, a big radio contract, Hollywood, a smile and a nod from Colossal Concerts, Inc., and nothing else. It is either the very top or it's home to Mother and behind a roll-top desk or a soda fountain. It's either headlines, front covers, and nervous breakdowns, or it's wedding bells in Westport, Connecticut. It's still a Barnum and Bailey world.

But it won't be much longer. There are too many nightingales. And the deserts are teeming with water and green.

Why Don't You Write an Opera?

I N 1924 THE old opera house Unter den Linden in Berlin was quite a different view from Frederick the Great's shack. It was a big, spacy, lavishly decorated structure, but it was still not lavish enough to satisfy the boundless ambition of its new boss, the Prussian state. Thirteen million marks were spent on a complete reconstruction of the house in an attempt to make it the most up-to-date and streamlined structure of its kind in the world. The stage was equipped with the most complicated technical innovations, and the crowning achievement of it all was the construction of a hydraulic elevator that would lift or lower the whole stage with all the scenery and a complete cast on it. The disappearance of the Venusberg in *Tannhäuser* within a few seconds or of the elaborately equipped hell in *Shvanda* became famous showpieces of the Staatsoper.

These thirteen million marks were invested just in the reconstruction of the house. The opera, aside from it, received a contribution from the government of three million marks every year. That meant ten thousand marks

for every one of the three hundred days in the year the house was in operation.

While this went on Unter den Linden at the expense of the Prussian state and the Prussian taxpayer, the city of Berlin had purchased a huge opera house in Charlottenburg, a different section of the town, after its private owners had gone into bankruptcy. It was to be known as the Municipal Opera House and was supported—out of city funds—with two and a half million a year. Under an energetic and youthful leadership (best proof for their accomplishments is the fact that all the people responsible for its policy left Germany with the advent of Hitler in 1933) it soon became a serious competition to the sedate, slow-moving opera house Unter den Linden, which remained a place for white ties and tails and which seemed unable to free itself from the depressing and reactionary spirit of its royal and imperial masters of the past.

The Prussian state decided to counterbalance this situation and to do something in order to take away some of the spotlight from the new city-owned opera house in Charlottenburg. What they did was to open a third opera house in Berlin, but this was to be one where people would not go in ties or tails but in shirt sleeves and working clothes. They got hold of firebrand conductor Otto Klemperer, made him boss of the new "Opera house at the Square of the Republic," and gave him one and a half million marks to squander away every year. This house, commonly known as Kroll Opera, achieved notoriety a few years later when the Nazis, after

they had burned down the Reichstag, did away with tenors and ballerinas and made that same Kroll Opera the home of their faked parliamentary sessions and the sounding board for Hitler's speeches. It was in the Kroll Opera that he unleashed World War II.

But in the twenties Hitler was still nothing but a funny man with a mustache. Klemperer lost no time. He proceeded to engage the most radical modernistic conductors, designers, and stage managers money could hire all over Europe, a strange crew, bent on doing something entirely new, unheard of, and completely revolutionary so far as opera goes. For the one and a half million marks which the government gave them (and which brought the amount of public support spent on opera in Berlin to seven millions in a single year!) they were going to give the government something to remember.

First they induced some of the big labor unions and similar organizations to buy enough tickets for their members to fill the twenty-two hundred seats of the theater for at least thirty performances of each opera they intended to give. With thirty performances guaranteed, they had to produce only ten operas during one year and would be able to play each of them to at least sixty thousand people.

This meant that they were able to rehearse an opera for at least eight weeks and to give it a minimum of eight orchestra rehearsals. As they had no costumes, no repertoire, in fact nothing but an empty house when they moved in, they could start every production from scratch; with new scenery, new staging, and, of course, a cast that had not traditional inhibitions or prejudices.

To top it all, they decided not to give any operas of the standard repertoire if they could help it. They either performed new, contemporary works, or they gave older operas which had been shelved by history and were not to be found in any of the ordinary repertory theaters. If they had to present something of what they considered "cornier" operas, they would present them in such a way that people would scarcely recognize them.

For a young man with a little office cell in Universal Edition in Vienna whose job and principal object in life was to get contemporary operas performed, all this was cheerful and encouraging, a lovely view indeed.

The imperial times were over. The theater all over Germany began to enter the realm of thinking of the Chamber of Commerce. The city fathers considered its accomplishments good advertising for the town, which was to be encouraged; its failures, bad publicity which was to be avoided. Ambitious mayors with an eye on the next election entered the race for operatic supremacy. Glamour, tootsies, white ties, and perfumed letters went out of the window. The time of royal splendor and princely romance was gone. The politicians took over.

They would supply the theater with money to increase the prestige of the city and to get their names in the newspapers by hook and by crook. The theater had to reverse its course completely. The hell with conservatism! Be up to date, boys! Put on as many first performances as you can get. Sauerkraut this year announces three world premières; we must have four or six or ten. There aren't

any? Get them. Commission them. Call Heinsheimer in Vienna. We have to make headlines, men. Don't sit around, do something; and after you have done it, put it on the news wires.

It sounds really silly, but it is a fact that within one single year there were not fewer than sixty world premières of new operas in Germany, one every sixth day.

In the Rhineland, within an area the size of the city of New York, there were ten different opera houses, all ambitious, all jealous of one another and determined to be bigger and better and certainly more conspicuous than the nine others. They were separated only by half-hour train rides. I could have breakfast with the manager of the opera house in Düsseldorf, lunch with the fellow in Essen, share coffee and pretzels with the man in Dortmund, have dinner in Bochum and a nightcap in Cologne—and between all these refreshments sell every one of them a new opera or a new ballet!

The world-première craze had taken hold of every theater all over the length and width of Europe, and ambitions became limitless. I shall never forget a music festival which I attended in the city of Duisburg in 1929 and during which a bewildered and exhausted crowd of music critics, publishers, musicians, and some worried-looking townspeople were exposed within six days to not fewer than nine brand-new operas. They all were produced by the staff of the Duisburg Opera House without any guests or any help from the outside. They all had completely new scenery and were most expensively staged just for this one occasion. This festival cost the city (which

was, by the way, only the twenty-fifth largest city in Germany) almost two million marks. The mayor made a wonderful speech at a banquet at which he offered to the assembled members of the press mountains of caviar. The boys finished the caviar and got busy cabling and phoning all over the continent. The pressroom looked as if there had been a prize fight. There was not too much they could say about some of the operas, so they said a lot about the city and the nice hotel they had eaten the caviar in and about the mayor who had sponsored that wonderful festival and who should be given credit for an unparalleled display of *Kultur*.

This sprawling landscape of Europe dotted with opera houses was a pretty view indeed for conductors and singers. But it was a veritable dream of paradise for that outcast, that pariah in the musical profession, the live composer. It gave him the chance to write operas with a good prospect of having them performed and with a fair possibility of having a success, getting repeat performances, and making some money.

There is still an odd and hazy conception abroad about composers and their ways of life. It is derived from cheap oil prints of Franz Schubert, a few bedtime stories about the life of Mozart, and the disastrous effects of half a century of intimate association with Puccini's opera, *La Bohème*.

Composers live in attics. They heat little iron stoves with old newspapers, and if the place doesn't get warm they lustily stuff symphonies and operas in the contrap-

tion. Somebody always brings a bottle of liquor but never any food. Just having burned an opera, the composer at once proceeds to write another one. He is interrupted by a strange but beautiful lady who lost something, and they at once proceed to look together for whatever it is. When they get up the next morning the composer skips the breakfast that isn't there to continue work on the opera. The lady dresses silently, anxious not to interfere with the manifestation of genius, and leaves on tiptoe.

When she returns at noon the opera is completed. She does not return alone but brings an old friend who is none other than the director of the Metropolitan Opera. He takes one look at the score, accepts it, and rushes away with it. Two days later it is produced. The silly public does not appreciate it. It is a flop. The lady, disgusted, dines with the opera director at the Waldorf. The composer goes home to his attic, alone, deserted. He still has not eaten, but who cares! Proudly he takes a stack of papers which for some unknown reason has not yet been used as fuel and begins a new opera. It will be completed the next day unless some female again loses a key or something.

In fact the work of composers is just as dependent on the hard realities of everyday life as the work of a book-keeper or of the calf-eyed cashier at the movie house around the corner. Composers never look like Schubert or Beethoven—and I have a strong suspicion that Schubert and Beethoven never looked the way a century of bad paintings would have them appear. Composers look

and dress and act like any other ordinary man you know and play golf or bridge with. They go to the barber regularly to get the same haircuts as you and I. If you take them out to lunch they eat heartily. I know they do. They like to live in nice houses, they like to drive cars—and in order to accomplish all this they have to have an income, a weekly, a monthly, a yearly income, just as you and I. There is absolutely nothing romantic about it. I don't say that composing is a business, because it isn't nice to say so—but it really is. It is a business, just as inventing the electric bulb or discovering America: these, too, were accomplishments of genius, all right, of a genius neither I nor you have; but in their application on the practical sides of life they had a sound economic basis and simple economic consequences.

Why did Verdi and Puccini and Wagner and Strauss write one opera after the other? They did not do it only because their genius as creative composers urged them to do so. They could just as well have written oratorios or string quartets or marches or nine symphonies. They did not receive a mysterious message from heaven asking them to proceed at once to compose *Die Meistersinger*. They were living, thinking, and acting in a society and under conditions where it was worth their while to undertake the terrific investment in time, strain, heartbreaking toil, and money which goes into the writing of the most complicated musical structure ever undertaken by man—the opera.

A modern opera score, such as *Tristan and Isolde* or *Der Rosenkavalier*, has between five hundred and six

hundred pages. Large pages. After the composer has actually conceived the music, invented the tunes, and sketched it out for piano, he has to proceed to score the work on these large pages. He has to write out the part for each instrument on a separate line, starting on the top of the page with the flutes. The score usually calls for three flutes, three or four oboes (one alternating with English horn), three or four clarinets (one alternating with bass clarinet), three bassoons, four to six horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, one or two harps, celesta, timpani, between six and twelve percussion instruments (such as triangle, bass drum, snare drum, Chinese blocks, tambourin, xylophone, etc., which have to be so organized that they can be handled by two or three players), and last but not least the busiest section of them all, the strings: violins (divided in first and second violins), violas, cellos, and double basses. There can be any number of additional instruments, such as a piano or two, an occasional gun, cowbells, a thunder machine, or an infant's rattle or birdie. And as if this wouldn't be enough, many operas call for an additional orchestra on and off the stage.

After our composer has written out all these lines and lines and lines on staves (a sixteenth of an inch apart), written them so that one can read them clearly and without the possibility of a misunderstanding, he has to fill in the parts for the singers—six or twelve or twenty singers—and the parts for the chorus. The chorus is usually divided in four different voices—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass—but to make it more complicated you can

split these up in eight or, if you still are not happy, in one or two double choirs. And after all this is done he has to write in the words to be sung by the six or twelve or twenty singers and the eight or sixteen groups in the chorus and all the remarks referring to the action, such as:

"Exit Tristan." This one is easy. But what about this one:

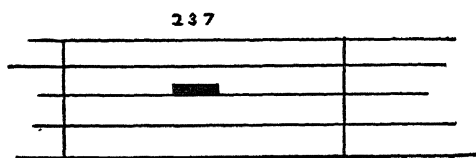
At this moment an old tirewoman enters through the same door. The Baron retreats, disappointed. Two footmen come from the left and bring a screen from the alcove. The Princess retires behind the screen, the tirewoman following her. The toilet table is brought to the center of the stage. Footmen open the folding door on the left. Enter the Notary, the Head Cook, followed by a scullion carrying the Menu Book. The Milliner, a scholar with a huge tome, and the Vendor of animals with tiny dogs and an ape. Valzachi and Annina, slipping in quickly behind these, take the foremost place on the left. The Noble mother with her three daughters take places on the right. All are in deep mourning. The Major-Domo leads the tenor and the flute player to the front. The Baron, in the background, makes a sign to a footman, gives him an order, and points to the back door.

Just write that one down in longhand and look at your watch. And there are dozens, hundreds, of these throughout the score.

I am not talking here about the spiritual labor of creation, about inventing, composing all the music, about listening to the mysterious voices in the composer's heart (or brain, as the case might be) telling him how to orchestrate the music he has composed—I am just trying

to suggest the amount of physical work, of time and of plain sitting on his behind it takes for a man to write the many thousands of notes and slurs and rests and pianos and fortissimos and words and dots and commas on one, only one, single page—and then to turn to page two and start again on the top with Flute I. And page three. And page four—still 651 more pages to go till, at the bottom of page 655, he can write FINIS and go out and get drunk.

But this full score, when at last completed, is only the beginning of the trouble. To make a performance possible, the part to be played by each instrument has to be extracted from the score. This, to be sure, cannot be done by just anyone who can write musical notes and jot down “Mary had a little lamb” for the kiddies. It has to be done by experts, and experts cost money. The expert knows, for instance, that when a tuba does not play for 237 bars he cannot just write in the tuba part:



He has to write in the part, what is called a cue, a friendly beacon of light that tells the tuba player six or eight bars *before* he comes in to watch and be ready. Such a guiding ray in the night is a melody or a rhythm, played by another instrument shortly before the fatal bar 237 is reached and played so that the man at the tuba can hear it, not just any bit of music that will be drowned in

the ocean of noise submerging the man who with sweat pouring down his face counts 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236—go. And what goes for the tuba player goes for the contra bassoon, the triangle, and anyone else of the seventy or eighty men in the band. And when your expert extracts the fiddle part, he had better think first before he starts writing and ends up at the bottom of a page in the midst of a hemidemisemiquaver passage in prestissimo, so that the player has to whistle the tune while turning the page, because he cannot turn *and* play.

These, of course, are just a few of the things you had better know before you go out to copy parts from a score. Another one is that you have to be a member of the Musicians' Union—so you might as well forget it right there.

Now all these orchestral parts are copied out—thousands of pages, a mountain of music—and somebody has paid the bill. And now these thousands of pages have to be proofread. Each part, bar by bar and note by note, has to be compared with the score. Searching for wrong notes wouldn't be so bad, but you have to recount these 237 bars' rest in the tuba part. Because if you don't and the expert copyist made a mistake and the mighty tuba should really pause 238 bars, your tuba player will come in one bar too early. That doesn't sound like anything when you read it in a book. But it certainly sounds like hell when you hear it in an opera house.

That is about all. Oh yes, the chorus, the four or eight or sixteen different groups of gentlemen and ladies, cannot learn their parts from your score. Each of them will

want a part to memorize. And your singers want a vocal score, a reduction of your orchestral score for voice and piano. That means that you have to write the whole opera, all 655 pages, once more, condensing your orchestra from forty complicated staves in the score to two staves, playable on a piano. And then you have to provide copies of that piano score for every singer and for everyone who coaches the singers and for the stage manager and the designer and Mr. Fabroni, who runs from one dressing room to the other and tells the singers to go on stage because they will be on in two minutes.

In spite of all these and innumerable other handicaps, there were almost nine hundred new operas performed in the first four decades of our century. Nine hundred scores, some four hundred thousand pages of music come to life. Unrecorded and forever unheralded are the countless others which were written but never performed, buried in desk drawers, burned in despair and disgust, thrown in the garbage by the man who bought the house and found the useless papers in the attic.

But let us look at the nine hundred lucky ones. Looking at this catalogue is like looking on the gray, dusty remains of a petrified forest. Once they were all alive. They had made a composer's heart beat faster for at least one fateful night. And now most of them are dead, irrevocably and finally, and no resurrection will ever send them back to life with flourishes and cymbals. Only here and there you still discover some green in the forest, a few ferns and vines, and ever so seldom an isolated tree, some of them

small, some big and strong, still full of vigor and sprawling life.

If we are very nice, very considerate, and guided by the best intentions, we might discover some sixty whose names at least sound familiar among the nine hundred. Let's call the roll.

Nineteen hundred was a good year. Two loud and clear voices answer the call: Puccini's *Tosca* and Charpentier's *Louise*. And there is a fainter response from Moscow: Rimsky-Korsakov's *Czar Saltan*.

1901: Antonin Dvořák's *Rusalka*. There is an opera, *The Polish Jew*, by one Weis, successful for years in Europe but forgotten today. Richard Strauss has his first success with *Feuersnot*. Mascagni, eleven years after *Cavalleria Rusticana* had made him famous overnight, tries again with an opera, *The Masks*. It is performed in seven Italian towns the same night! It at once joined the petrified forest.

1902: Massenet, *Le Jongleur de Nôtre Dame* . . . It's his sixteenth opera. . . . He is to write ten more! But the thirtieth of April is a red-letter day: Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande* has its première at the Opéra-Comique in Paris.

1903: Wolf-Ferrari enters the scene with *Le Donne Curiose* (*The Curious Women*). He had tried before, but this is his first success. And there is a flop which must be registered here: *Tiefland*, by Eugène d'Albert, performed (in German) in Prague. Yes, it was a flop all right, so much so that the writer of the libretto, one Rudolf Lothar, who had taken the story from a Catalan play,

was utterly disgusted with it all and, convinced the opera to be a complete washout, offered all his rights in it to the composer for whatever he would pay him. He thought D'Albert was a fool when the man gave him \$200 and accepted at once.

But D'Albert went home, changed the plot slightly, cut a bit here, added something there, and got the opera house in Leipzig to produce the new version. It became at once one of the greatest operatic successes of the German school and has been in the European repertoire ever since. D'Albert made \$250,000 if he made a penny on his \$200 investment in Rudolf Lothar's share.

1904 proudly presents: *Madame Butterfly*. But there is another arrival, unnoticed and unrecorded. In the little Czech town of Brno the opera *Her Foster Daughter*, by Leos Janaček, is produced and soon forgotten. Janaček is an organist at the local music school. Nobody knows about him; nobody looks at his opera again. But in 1916 a strong national feeling rose among the Czechs. They were eager to display their own national art and music while secretly preparing for their independence and secession from the hated Hapsburg empire. Somebody remembered Janaček, and his opera was produced in Prague twelve years after its première in Brno—mainly to annoy the Hapsburgs. But what the Czechs could do the Hapsburg government in Vienna could do as well. The Emperor ordered that a German translation should be made and Janaček's work be performed at the Imperial Opera House in Vienna: just to show his erring Czech subjects what a loving father

would do for them. And this is how the opera came to be performed in Vienna. It was one of the ironies of history that the performance didn't come off till early in 1918, shortly before the collapse of the empire, the successful and irrevocable secession of the Czechs from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the forceful removal of His Majesty from Vienna.

It was too late for Emperor Karl, all right, to try to pacify the Czechs by performing one of their operas, but it wasn't too late for Leos Janaček, who was by now sixty-four years old. His opera, now named *Jenufa*, was played in Vienna, Maria Jeritza sang the lead, and soon afterward the work was a world success. Nobody was more surprised than the lovely, unforgettable old man in Brno, who continued as an organist and a small-town music teacher in spite of all his late fame and who kept on writing wonderful masses, strange symphonies, and operas in his little house.

1905: Again a green and sprawling tree: Richard Strauss's *Salome*.

1906: Wolf-Ferrari scores with *I Quattro Rusteghi*. There is the new annual Massenet.

1907: Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe Bleue* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Kitesch*.

1908: A dud—but 1909 brings Strauss's *Elektra*. It is the first time that Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal work together. Rimsky has a genuine success with *Coq d'Or*, Wolf-Ferrari with *Secret of Susanne*. There is an opera, *Quo Vadis*, by Nougues, which made quite a career for a few years. Where did it go?

1910: Massenet's twenty-second: *Don Quixote*. Debussy's *L'Enfant Prodigue*. Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West* and Humperdinck's *Königskinder*.

Nineteen-eleven produces the last great and unchallenged operatic success on record: Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*.

1912: A strange and tragic figure makes its first appearance: Franz Schreker, an Austrian composer, writer, teacher, conductor. His first opera, *Der Ferne Klang*, is an immediate success. Eminent music critics hail him as a new Richard Wagner. He writes his own librettos, bizarre, overdone, with a cheap and tarty eroticism. Schreker made a deep impression on Hertzka, who became his friend and publisher. He wrote two more successful operas and became director of the important Academy of Music in Berlin. Many of the rising generation of younger composers were his pupils.

And then, almost overnight, his time was over. His operas, successfully performed, enthusiastically reviewed only yesterday, seemed all of a sudden terribly outmoded, blown up, almost ridiculous. For the older generation he was still too modern; for the younger men he was yesterday's fashion. Everybody turned from him—only Hertzka kept his faith and friendship.

He lived to see his established works decay before his own eyes, his new works rebuffed, refused, ridiculed. If ever a man died of a broken heart it was Franz Schreker.

1913: Montemezzi, who had tried before, makes the grade with *The Love of the Three Kings*.

1914: A new name for the first time: Igor Stravinsky,

the opera *Rossignol*. And let's be nice and mention Ra-
baud's *Marouf* and Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*.

1915: *Mona Lisa*, by Herr von Schillings.

1917: Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina*.

1918: Stravinsky again with *Histoire d'un Soldat*. The
three one-act operas by Puccini.

1919: Richard Strauss. The beginning of the decline:
Woman without Shadow.

1920: Korngold, *The Dead City*.

1921: A great composer appears: Prokofieff, *The
Love of the Three Oranges*.

1924: *Nerone*, by Boïto. *Intermezzo*, by Richard
Strauss. *La Cena delle Beffe*, by Giordano.

1925: An important event (we will talk more about it
later): Alban Berg's *Wozzek*.

1926: Farewell from Puccini: *Turandot*.

1927: A year of new operas: Krenek's *Jonny*, Wein-
berger's *Shvanda*, Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, Hindemith's
Hin und Zurück, Milhaud's *Le Pauvre Matelot*.

1928: Introducing Kurt Weill and his *Dreigroschen-
oper*. A late Richard Strauss: *The Egyptian Helena*.

Here ends the record. But this is only 1928. Oh, there
were many more, but not one we could enter here among
the names of the living. And most of them had an ominous
label in the chronicle: "Last opera of the composer per-
formed in Germany."

The curtain had gone down. It was then when re-
hearsals began all over Europe for the overwhelming
success which was to be played for twelve years in suc-
cession, tonight and every night: Adolf Hitler and Benito

Mussolini with a cast of millions in the super-colossal production: *The New Europe*.

The United States, the most up-to-date country in the world, where a car, a refrigerator, a suit, a railroad, a bridge, a fountain pen, a job, and a wife are old and heading for the junk pile after they have been in use for a year or two, is feeding on the most conservative and old-fashioned operatic diet. More than one hundred organizations perform opera in America today. They choose their repertoire from more than sixty different works. But out of these sixty operas, not ten have been written in the twentieth century—and of the successful ones, the ones that really count as living realities, none has been written later than 1910. The standard repertoire of operas in streamlined, youthful America is made up of a tottering array of middle-aged and very old scores. Here are the twelve most successful ones, the real high lights and popular successes, each of them performed by more than ten different companies in the United States during a single recent year: *Traviata* (first produced in 1853), *Faust* (1859), *Aïda* (1871), *Carmen* (1875), *Rigoletto* (1851), *Pagliacci* (1892), *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), *Il Trovatore* (1853), *Martha* (1847), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), *La Bohème* (1896), and the *Barber of Seville* (1816). All you will have to do is to compare this amazing parade of veterans with the dramas and comedies which are successfully produced on Broadway and all over the land on any given day and you cannot help feeling that opera has become a collection of museum

pieces, displayed in endless repetition without the benefit of fresh air or a change of scenery.

Unless something is done about this situation, and done soon, the day will not be far off when the audience will get up at that 3,214th performance of *Aïda*, walk out, and never come back. On that day the producers and managers and directors, all the smart business people, will find out that they have been underestimating the public and their taste and their real interest for years and years. There was a nice and obvious sign of how the wind blows only recently when the New York City Opera put on a performance of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne on Naxos*. This opera is thirty years old. It had never been produced by a professional company in New York because it had the stigma of being artistic and chi-chi and high-brow, and that meant, of course, that it was a money loser and should be shunned like the plague. The New York City Opera Company put it on merely as an artistic event, to do something for "culture" and to get some nice publicity out of it. They never thought it could be a success; they had scheduled only two performances, and the gravediggers were already prepared to put the pretty corpse back in the tomb for another thirty years of undisturbed slumber. But at the night of the first performance the public went mad. They thought it was the most wonderful thing; they liked it better than all the *Traviatas* and *Trovatores* and *Marthas* they had been shown so many times, and the next day *Ariadne* made headlines: the tabloids called it a sure-fire hit, and *Life* magazine sent a crew to take pictures. People who had never known

that there was such a thing as the City Opera rushed to the box office, and instead of giving two performances they gave a whole series. *Ariadne* had done more to put the City Center on the map and to awaken the interest of the people in opera than any of the routine successes had ever done. And *Ariadne* is thirty years old, and it is high-brow and chi-chi and artistic! What would happen if one day a composer of our own time, an American composer, and an American writer would get together and write a real opera, one that doesn't borrow its breath and heartbeat from the clichés of the past but from the realities of the present?

It never seemed worth while to any writer or composer. There was the Met and the Met and the Met and nothing else and so what—they put my opera on and I get a couple of performances—if they put it on. It seemed never worth the effort, the time, the investment, the grueling grind of work, the struggle to get the right story and the right book. But as America's musical culture is growing at an amazing, breath-taking speed, opera is bound to take its place, just as orchestras, radio, music in schools have done. There are already well over one hundred organizations playing opera in America today, giving from one to one hundred and fifty performances a year. But their repertoire is still based almost entirely on works imported from Europe and written a century ago!

Porgy and Bess is the only example of a successful American operatic venture. People say it isn't quite an opera—although I don't see why the *Barber of Seville* and silly old *Martha* should be one and *Porgy and Bess*

shouldn't. But let us not get involved in aesthetics. *Porgy and Bess* certainly has the one great and essential secret for a successful opera: its story is simple. You can tell it in a sentence or two. And it is based on primitive human passions. All the great and successful operas have these simple and primitive books. You can sing most of them in Chinese or Sanskrit or you can just act them as a pantomime and sing la-la-la and mm-mm-mm: and everybody will understand the love and the passion, the jealousy, the fear, the tension, the tragedy, that always have been and are and will be the stuff opera is made of. It all goes back to a few basic and very human reactions. Justifiable jealousy leads to disaster: *Carmen*, *Cavalleria*, *Pagliacci*, *Wozzek*. Undeserved jealousy leads to disaster: *Othello*, *Masked Ball*, *Tristan*. I love you but I can't marry you: *Aïda*, *Butterfly*, *Traviata*, *Manon*, *Forza del Destino*, *Louise*, *Faust*, *Lucia*, *La Bohème*, *Norma*, *Lakmé*, *Rigoletto*. Crime doesn't pay: *Don Giovanni*, *Tosca*, *Salome*, *Tannhäuser*, Wagner's *Ring*, *Freischütz*. Love is stronger than money: *Bartered Bride*, *Meistersinger*, *Barber of Seville*, *Don Pasquale*, *Rosenkavalier*, *Figaro*. (Practically every successful comic opera is based on this one subject.)

I had never understood the complexities and difficulties of writing a good operatic libretto till in 1927 I got involved in a contest which was sponsored by Universal Edition and called on the writers of the whole world to try their luck. The winner was assured not only of a considerable amount in cash, but the great Universal

Edition promised to see to it that his text would at once be composed and performed. Within a few months not fewer than 211 sealed envelopes had arrived. The judges were all prominent and very busy people and could, of course, not be bothered with 211 manuscripts. This was the type of job they always gave me.

Contests invariably open up Pandora's boxes in every corner of the world. People no sooner read about a contest than they rush madly up to the attic in search for that play they wrote when they went to high school. They dust it off, scratch out their names, put on "Flamingo" or "Blushing Violet" as a *nom de plume*, and mail it insured and registered. The next day it gets number 184, and some poor wretch like me has to read it. In most cases, of course, you have to go only as far as the second page, where it says "Characters." You open that page, read "Count Heinrich XIV of Bavaria, Pephildis, his wife, Rubico, a monk," and you close it and put it away and take on number 185. But many times it isn't as easy as that and you have to read the whole damn thing and put it on a pile marked "Judges." Some fifty really got that far, but when our judges were through with them they said that none of them was good enough to deserve a prize, and there we were with 211 senders faithfully waiting for their money and sure to cry "Crooks!" and "Foul play!" if we wouldn't pay. So we got the judges together again and told them that somebody just had to get the money. They finally split it up among four contestants, and we announced the winners with a great flourish of publicity and sent their works out to every

composer we could think of. They came back as fast as the mails would carry them. *None of them has ever been set to music!* Ever since I have a deep and unshakable mistrust in contests and a great admiration and respect for the difficult job of writing a play for musical composition.

Playwrights, as a rule, are not interested in writing a libretto. They do not wish to share their royalties with a composer; they want to be independent and not subject to the restrictions that music must impose on their work; they want to be masters, not slaves, and—last but not least—they have not the slightest idea of what it is all about. When Aaron Copland once asked Irwin Shaw whether he wouldn't like to write a libretto for him Shaw said, "No, thanks. No playwright wants to have his fine prose messed up by music."

If you look over the title pages of any opera you can think of, you will almost never find a famous or even a well-known name responsible for the libretto. The people who wrote them were specialists, craftsmen, masters of their trade, but masters who were content to work in the dark and whose names are known only to musicologists. But if you ever want to know how such a job is done take a copy of Shakespeare's play *Othello* and the libretto of Verdi's opera *Othello*, written by Arrigo Boïto, "based on Shakespeare's tragedy," and compare the two. Here, in fact, you can see all the basic tricks and eternal secrets of the fascinating and difficult job of a libretto writer. Boïto cuts out the whole first act of Shakespeare's play. His

Othello begins with the second act of Shakespeare's drama and it begins with lightning and thunder and storm in great operatic fashion. A chorus of excited spectators replaces the refined and detailed discussions of the play. Othello's entry is a masterpiece of dramatic concentration and effect. He appears without Desdemona (who enters with him in the play much earlier), followed only by sailors and soldiers. He ascends the steps coming up from the shore, sings four short lines, and is gone like a flash. And now Iago is introduced and Cassio, and the drama of hate and intrigue and bloody vengeance is lined out in short sentences and broad, simple gestures. Desdemona does not appear; the soprano voice is not introduced in the coarse and brutal world of men till toward the very end of the act—in marked and significant contrast to the play, which knows nothing of these musical considerations. When she opens her mouth for the first time and sings, she is alone with Othello under a dark and silent sky as love and passion move husband and wife in a long scene which is only in the opera, where the music sings its eternal love song, uniting the two voices to that final "*Tarda la notte—vien—venere splende,*" which nobody will ever forget who has ears to hear and a heart to be touched by beauty.

Griselda Is a Bad Girl

THREE YEARS had passed since 1924 and the days when I had met Ernst Krenek for the first time at the première of *Zwingburg* in Max von Schillings's imperial-republican opera house in Berlin. *Zwingburg* had been what is known as an "artistic success." To say of an opera that it is an artistic success is like saying of a woman that she is intelligent and has interesting features. It is a death sentence. Since then Krenek had written a second opera. As he was a young man of promise and one of the boys in fashion, he had no trouble getting it performed at some music festival in Frankfurt. They called it "an interesting contribution to the social and moral problems of our troubled time." Instead of calling a new opera "an interesting contribution" you might as well take an ax and hit it over the head.

And now I had come to Kassel to attend a third Krenek première at the opera house. This one was based on a play by Oskar Kokoschka. Kokoschka is to my mind one of the greatest living painters. His portraits and landscapes are unforgettable in their acid truth and over-

whelming force of expression. They give not only features and contours. They tell you what is behind a face. They convey violent and convincing legends behind a landscape. But, as seems the case with many great artists, Kokoschka was not satisfied to be a great painter. He wanted to be a writer as well. And when he wrote plays it was like Jack Benny playing the violin.

His plays, obscure, completely incomprehensible, were purest expressionism, which was the fashion of the day. They had a strange attraction for the young composers of the period. Paul Hindemith had composed one of them with the promising title, *Murderer, Hope of Women*, as early as 1921, and now Krenek had devoted the better part of a year to a musical setting of Kokoschka's *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

The opening night of *Orpheus and Eurydice* had again been the usual success. Which opening night isn't? Any stage manager who knows the rudiments of his profession will know how to organize his curtain calls so as to squeeze the last drop out of the lemon of applause. First he will send out his leading singers. They are popular with the audience, and no matter how much the people disliked the new opera, they will greet them with polite applause and with all the warmth of a long personal acquaintance. That will usually last for three curtain calls.

At the first sign of a weakening of the applause at the other side of the curtain the manager has to think fast. A delay of seconds can be fatal—and he knows that a dead applause is as dead as a doornail and can *never* be re-

vived. So he shouts an order and out goes the tenor—alone.

The audience likes him. They have heard him many times in *Aïda* and *Bohème* and all the other operas they know and like. The applause which had just been breathing its last breath picks up. Back comes the tenor, out goes the soprano. The applause comes back to life. Out goes the baritone, the contralto, the tenor buffo. That was a mistake. They pull him back hurriedly and send out the complete cast, every one of them.

That was a smart move, you can hear it. Back they come and out they go again (hurry up, hurry up), but this time the manager cunningly mingles the somber black and white and the pale features of the conductor among the colorful costumes and heavily made-up faces.

The conductor acts embarrassed. He motions toward the orchestra. He kisses the hand of the soprano. When he tries to go back he gets caught in the curtain. The audience becomes enthusiastic. The temper of success is in the air. *The new opera is completely forgotten and this is the moment for the composer to be dragged on the stage!*

He has been waiting in the wings from the moment the last bar of the score had been played, like a race horse trembling for the starter's bell. But he still is not allowed to follow his impulse and rush out. He has to resist, visibly resist. A great commotion is created on the stage. The public, by now, is frantic. There are shouts: "Composer!" "Author!"—and at last he has to give in. He is pulled on the stage, clinging to the conductor, to the diva, to

the tenor, shaking hands, motioning to imply that it is all their work and their work only—till at last they turn him around to take that bow he has been waiting for for so many months, that bow he has practiced in front of the bedroom mirror a hundred times, that bow in front of a cheering, shouting, clapping audience.

The next day the papers report thirty curtain calls, wild ovations, a great success!

Krenek and I were sitting in a small hotel room in Kassel, just the two of us. It was one o'clock in the morning. The thirty curtain calls were over. The smiles of victory were over, the banquet, the speeches, the congratulations. Ernst Krenek took a long drink and asked me what I really thought of it.

At that moment I couldn't help remembering the morning a few weeks ago when my good friend Franz Horch, then an assistant to Max Reinhardt in Vienna, had called me on the phone and had asked me to attend an opening night at one of the local theaters for him. He had to report to the boss the next day, couldn't go himself, and needed some information on the success or failure of the new play.

I went. It was rather a nice play, altogether quite all right.

The next morning Franz called up.

"How was it?" he asked eagerly.

"Well . . ." I began.

"Thank you very much," Franz's hurried voice came over the phone. And down went the receiver on his end.

It was that split second of hesitation that had told him the whole story, that split second that separates the unrestrained utterance of an overwhelming impression from a thought-up statement. That split second it takes you to *think* before you answer. You don't have to think, not even for a split second, if you have seen the real thing: it just bursts out of you, in words, in gestures, in the setting of your face. There is nothing to think, nothing to hesitate over, nothing to formulate.

Most people, of course, do not wish to hear the truth. They do not want to notice the fatal split second. Fools want to be fooled. They want the polite statement, the noncommittal smile, the silent handshake. Fool 'em, they ask for it. But you cannot hide the clear and unshakable truth from a real artist. He will always hear the ghost voice that cuts in while your mouth says, "It was wonderful. It was a great success." That ghost voice that cuts in and says, "Liar, liar, liar."

"Ernst," I said without hesitation, "you know it anyway, don't you? It is again an artistic success. They called your last opera 'an interesting contribution.' This one is going to be labeled 'deep.' Never mind the thirty curtain calls. No new opera can be called 'deep' and can live to tell the story."

He did not seem to be surprised. Ernst wasn't a man to be deceived by curtain calls.

"I have to talk to you," he said. "Every month for the last few years Hertzka has been sending me three hundred marks 'on account of royalties.' But I seem to be unable to earn any royalties. How long is this going to continue?"

Another month, maybe another year, then I'll be through. Have you seen the last statement Universal sent me?"

Had I seen his statement! It was something you would see once and never forget. This is how it looked:

<i>Advances paid</i> 10,800		<i>Royalties earned</i> 1,014.20
		<i>Balance (red)</i> 9,785.80

"It doesn't look pretty, does it?" said Ernst with a sad, embarrassed smile. "The way I am going I will never be able to pay it back."

"Don't you worry about money, Ernst," I said. "As long as Hertzka keeps on paying you, you just take what is coming to you. I appreciate your scruples. I have never heard a composer expressing feelings of that sort. But I tell you one thing: in the long run, in the last analysis, Hertzka never loses."

Ernst promised to try again. He would take one more gamble before giving up.

The next day I went back to Vienna to report to Hertzka about the thirty curtain calls and their tragic implications. Ernst remained as a second assistant conductor at the opera house in Kassel, a town in the midst of the so-called German republic, populated by retired imperial generals, royal tax collectors, and Prussian judges—a solitary firecracker ready to explode at any time among the pink cups and blue saucers in Grandmother's cupboard.

We heard little from him. To my grief I had been right in my predictions. No second theater accepted

Orpheus and Eurydice, and it soon disappeared from the repertoire in Kassel. It had joined forever the petrified forest.

We kept on sending the monthly advance money to Ernst Krenek—but once in a while when Hertzka signed the check I thought I saw a flicker, ever so light, in his right eye.

Then word came that Ernst was keeping his promise and was trying again. He was working on his fourth opera. This time he had written the libretto himself, something nobody since Richard Wagner had done successfully—and when Hertzka heard about it there were flickers in both of his eyes. To make things even more disquieting, rumors would have it that Ernst, who had been married recently, had not only dedicated his new opera to his wife but that she had actually a helping hand in the construction of the libretto and that the title of the new opera was her personal brain child.

This was disturbing news indeed. I have to explain at this point that bitter experience of many years had created a deep-rooted prejudice against composers' wives in the higher circles of Universal Edition, and we might as well talk frankly about it.

We had come to classify composers' wives generally into two clearly distinguished categories:

1. Wives who cook, give birth, and leave the room when you talk business with their husbands.
2. Wives who don't.

Sweethearts, common-law wives, concubines, and ordinary girl friends frequently encountered in the company

of composers were not classified at all. They were easily dealt with by sending them a box of candy, half a dozen roses, or by just addressing them as Mrs. Composer. This deliberately faulty recognition of their precarious position as the status of a legitimate spouse usually pleased them so much that they would eat out of your hand. I never had any trouble with any of them, bless their hearts.

We were only concerned, and, as I shall try to prove, rightly so, with the real thing.

The wife of type 2 (see above) has made my life miserable in many and always new ways. Volumes could be written on the subject, but they wouldn't be pleasant to read. I should like, however, to single out and herewith present two specimens which I have learned to consider as the most devastating type:

- (a) The Piano-Playing Wife
- (b) The Score-Carrying Wife

The piano-playing wife arrives, utterly unexpected and as a complete surprise to everybody, with her husband, whom you have asked in the goodness of your foolish heart to come and play his new opera for you.

"This is my wife," says the composer—as if there could be any doubt in the matter. "My wife will play the opera on the piano and I will sing it."

You feel your knees give in under you. You glance at Hertzka. He looks suddenly pale and very old. The tips of his beard tremble like leaves in the wind. Fräulein Rothe brings in a large pitcher of water and puts it before him.

In the meantime the wife has taken her seat at the

piano, opens a large brief case, and takes out the manuscript. The manuscript is bound in leather and has the name of the opera and of the composer stamped on it in bright gold. When I see that leather binding I look again at Hertzka. He tries to pour water from the pitcher in a glass. He seems to need a drink badly. But his hands shake.

You might ask: What is wrong with binding a manuscript in brown leather? It seems all right. You cannot know that bitter and long experience had taught us to look with utter distrust at any musical manuscript submitted in a leather binding, and that this distrust at once changed to an adamant attitude of determined refusal if the cover showed in gold letters the title of the work (such as *The Universe*, *Inferno*, or just simple *Man*), the name of the composer (in large capital letters), and, in italics, the dedication: *To my wife* or just *To Hilda*.

This might sound like a smallish and silly prejudice or a cheap joke, but it is neither. Only the dilettante, the eternal amateur, has the strange, overpowering urge to provide the most beautiful clothes for his infant. He seems to feel instinctively that these clothes are needed to cover and hide its poor, anemic, sagging body. Something deep inside tells him that he will never see his work in print, never find it displayed while peering in the windows of a bookstore, never hear it played while sitting in the dark background of a box at the opera. He knows that he never will be in Who's Who.

And yet there is so little that is missing. He is a good musician, a fine scholar; he knows his counterpoint, his

harmony, and his orchestration. He has worked hard and tirelessly. He ponders over every sentence, every bar, every phrase, till it is "right." Everything in his work is "right." There are no mistakes anybody could put his finger on. He knows all the rules. His orchestra sounds; his symphony is neither too long nor too short. He knows how to write effectively for a piano, a voice, a piccolo. So what is wrong with him?

He's just not an artist, that's all. All his toil and all his efforts will never produce the spark, the flame, the fire, the mighty conflagration. This is his tragedy. And because something in him knows the terrible truth he keeps these doomed children so dear to his heart in the most beautiful surroundings he can find for them. He creates for them a make-believe world of leather and gold.

We had seen manuscripts of many important composers come to our desks. The scores of Mahler and Schoenberg, Milhaud and Ravel, Richard Strauss and Béla Bartók. We had seen the solemn pages of Alban Berg's *Wozzek*, now enshrined at the Library of Congress in Washington, but then just another opera. We had seen the hasty pencil scribble of Weinberger's *Shvanda* long before the whole world knew and whistled the Polka and the Fugue.

Yes, we had seen all sorts of manuscripts, written, as were Mahler's symphonies, in the furious and exhausting battles of creation, manuscripts jotted down on rattling railroads, on mountain meadows, in the trembling light of a farmhouse, soiled with ink and coffee, drenched with tears. Manuscripts written on loose sheets, pages torn out,

bars crossed over and restored again, a section scratched out with violent strokes of the pen, or cut out with a knife.

None of these had been bound in leather or stamped in gold. For the men who wrote them they were just working material, just sand and bricks and iron and strong wooden beams, not the house itself. No loving care was wasted on the calligraphy of mediocrity. None of them had their title pages drawn with a ruler and painted in red and green ink.

This is why Hertzka's hand trembled when he reached for the pitcher.

"The opera is called *Inferno*," says the composer. "I wrote the libretto myself."

He sends a long look of love and understanding to his wife. She looks back. He nods—he is ready. She turns around and opens the score. The title page is drawn with a ruler and written in red and green. She slowly turns the page and begins to play the overture.

Why, oh God, don't I have the strength to stop them right here? When he said the title of the opera is *Inferno*, when he looked at his wife with this darling-you-and-I-we-know-don't-we look, nay, when they opened the door and entered the room, I knew all about it. These operas *always* deal with the life of the composer and his wife, because that is all he can think of, all he will ever be able to write about. But in the opera he is not a composer—with great pains and little cunning he camouflages himself as a sculptor. He is an outstanding and a most serious-minded sculptor. He sculpts beautiful things day and

night. First he sculpted Faith. Then he sculpted Through Darkness to Light. And now he won first prize with a statue simply called Beauty. His wife has been posing as model for Faith and Light and even for Beauty. And now she is posing for his greatest work, a giant marble creation symbolizing the final victory of the forces of light over the forces of evil, named Dawn.

All is well, but in the second act, just before he really gets going on Dawn, he meets—at dusk, apparently—that girl Griselda. Griselda is a bad girl. The sculptor takes her to a night club. Here he forgets all about his career and his vocation and about the call of suffering humanity that should make him cut pieces of marble out of Dawn instead of trying to make Griselda in a pink booth and listening to hot gypsy music at Joe's.

And what does the wife do? The wife, forgiving, understanding, ready to bring every sacrifice for humanity or for her husband, that wonderful wife gets herself a job as hat-check girl at Joe's. The husband comes in with Griselda.

"Check your hat, sir?"

The husband turns around. He tosses Griselda to the gypsy. He refuses to check his hat. He goes home, straight and without detours, and while the curtain slowly falls he takes his mallet and—no, you are wrong, he doesn't hit his wife over the head—he just hits Dawn.

Yes, sir, I knew it all, long before the wife turned around and played the first bar. But there is nothing you can do—unless you have a heart of stone—and I haven't. You know this is going to last three hours and ten minutes.

You know what the outcome will be, that we will never publish *Inferno*, and that it will never be performed. But you just have to sit through it. There is good old Dawn, playing the piano and believing, believing in her husband's opera, with all the power of her poor frustrated heart. There is the composer-sculptor or sculptor-composer, singing and acting and living his own life and his own opera, and the only person you really would like to meet, that Griselda, never shows up. But you have to let it go to the inevitable finish, to that sunrise at dawn in the last act, with harps and fiddles and trombones, and an endless C-major chord.

At last it is over. The wife turns to you. The composer turns to you. They look at you and just wait.

And now, my friend, I want you—yes, *you*—to be there, to get up and say something!

This gives you an idea about the habits and activities of the piano-playing wife.

The score-carrying wife is a pest known to and feared by conductors all over the world. She got it in her head that her husband just doesn't know how to promote his music and that the only way to get conductors to look at his scores is the direct assault. She will never give up. No sacrifice is too much, no weather too severe, no voyage too long, no room well enough guarded. She will wait in hotel lobbies hours and hours, undismayed, composed, and awake. Here is Stokowski. He has seen her from the outside. He tries to escape. He hides his face; he rushes to the elevator—in vain. The wife is faster. She squeezes

herself and her scores through the closing door. Stokowski is trapped, hunted down like an animal. He is alone in an elevator with a wife and a score. He is a gentleman. He chooses the score.

Score-carrying wives never change, never age, never die. I have known many of them for twenty-five years in Vienna and Paris and Venice, rolling on like battleships with scores tucked under their arms and with smallish husbands modestly and embarrassedly sailing behind them—and I still see them, the same wives, the same scores, the same husbands, in New York, Boston, and Los Angeles. They can be found everywhere, and wherever you see them their presence indicates that a prominent conductor must be near, like the sea gull heralds the approaching coast. But the place where they really thrive, the soil where they sink in their roots deep and solid, are those strange rooms backstage of every concert hall where artists and conductors sweat it out before a concert, change their collars and drink lemon juice during the intermission, and eagerly wait to be told afterward that they liked it by people who have no choice but to say that they did—the greenroom.

The crowd invading a greenroom after a symphony concert is divided into four groups.

There are first the members of the board of directors of the orchestra. They are dressed in evening clothes and look very distinguished and pitifully bored. They call the conductor by his first name—unless he is so great that they address him as “Doctor.”

The conductor is overjoyed to see them.

"Awfully nice of you to come. So glad you enjoyed it."

Sweetly he calls Mrs. Conductor.

"Dorothy, here are John and Elaine."

Dorothy radiates delight.

"Hello, Elaine darling [kiss], so happy you could come . . . did you really . . . dinner with you and John, of course, any day . . . only you know my husband is *so* busy . . . please *do* call . . . or I'll call . . . only my husband is *so* busy . . . that will be wonderful . . . thank you . . . so happy . . ."

By now John has pushed Elaine out of the door.

He wipes the smile from his face like a speck of dust.

"I wish I knew why in hell we have to go through this every Tuesday."

Elaine just looks at him. John is silent.

Through the door comes the conductor's exuberant voice.

"Dorothy, here are Arthur and Lucille."

After the members of the board have been smiled and kissed away the second group of people are admitted to the greenroom. There is always a score-carrying wife among them. She leads that shuffling parade of composers who want to be performed, publishers who want to submit new works, concert agents who want to sell artists, and violinists who want an engagement. For them there is the painted smile, the restrained look, the hurried "My husband really is very tired after a concert," the fatal "We will write you." Most of them hate to be here. They hate to wait in line on a narrow staircase and be

pushed around, hot, tired, and almost suffocating, for forty-five minutes. They would like to go home instead or have a glass of beer at the rathskeller across the street. But they don't have the guts to go. They do not dare to be missed in the procession of well-wishers. "My husband is really very tired after a concert"—but believe me, brother, he is never too tired to notice that you didn't come to tell him how wonderful it was!

Then there is always a group of people who just come to be there for the fun of it. Kids with albums and programs to be autographed. A couple of servicemen with sheepish smiles. And there is always Mr. Wilkinson from Topeka, Kansas, who is in town for two days.

"I promised Evelyn to bring her up here—so we can tell the folks home something about the big city."

"Awfully glad to meet you, Mr. Wilbertson. Dorothy, this is Mr. and Mrs. Willington. They came all the way from Texas to hear me conduct."

"How do you do, Mr. Riberton and Mrs. Riverton. It's awfully nice to have you here. How long will you . . . Already, isn't that too bad. . . . When my husband conducts in Memphis, you must come and look us up."

The fourth group does not mingle with the crowd. They are in no hurry. They wait quietly till the mob passes. They sit around, talking, relaxed, assured. They are: the musical director of the Green Network; Mr. Jonathan J. Big, advertising manager of the Disgusting Hair Tonic, Inc., sponsors of the conductor's weekly

broadcast, and Mrs. Big, and the head of the Defeat Recording Company. They just sit there and wait. They don't have to bow, they don't have to smile, they don't have to like it. It won't last long, and Dorothy will come out.

"Won't you step in, gentlemen?"

They step in.

Mr. Jonathan J. Big sits down.

"I didn't like your program tonight," he says. "Can't use it on the air, you know." He takes a crumpled piece of paper out of his pocket and hands it to the conductor.

"This is the program I worked out for Monday night's broadcast. It will be all right, won't it?"

The conductor takes the sheet of paper. He doesn't look at it.

"It's quite all right, J. B.," he says. "It's quite all right."

Dorothy takes the paper. She looks at it.

"I think it's lovely. I think it's simply wonderful."

J. B. smiles.

Curtain.

I really seem to have trouble sticking to my story—but all these subjects are just too fascinating to let them go without some comments. Where was I? Oh yes, I was saying that the rumors that Ernst Krenek's wife was working with him on the libretto of his new opera did not make his position easier with the powers that be in Universal. We did not know then that Berta Krenek would always leave the room when we talked business

with her husband, was never carrying scores in green- or any other rooms, and did not worship manuscripts bound in leather—in other words, that she was the best wife a composer could have, so far as we were concerned.

In the winter of 1926 Ernst wrote me that after the depressing experience of three “artistic successes” he did not feel it to be fair to have the new work printed before it was tested, and that he himself was trying to arrange for a performance but so far had failed to get the new work accepted by any producer. He had offered it to several opera houses without success and seemed reconciled to another defeat. I knew that it would be his last attempt. If this one would fail he would have to give up.

At last he wrote to say that the Municipal Theater in Leipzig had accepted the new work and was to première it in February 1927. He hoped we would be able to come, and Hertzka and I joined him at the day of the opening.

Half an hour after the curtain had gone up on the first act of *Jonny Spielt Auf* (*Jonny Leads the Band*) we knew that this time Ernst Krenek had done it. There was nothing to think about. No split-second deliberation was needed. It was a crashing, smashing hit.

How did we know? Well, you just know. You hear it in the temperature of the applause. You read it on the faces of the audience. You don’t have to wait for newspaper reviews; you don’t have to ask your neighbor how he liked it. You know.

A few weeks later Hertzka called me in his office. He was just signing a letter to Ernst Krenek and wanted me to see the check he was sending him.

"Dear Mr. Krenek," he wrote, "I take pleasure in enclosing herewith, etc."

The statement read:

<i>Advances paid 14,400</i>	<i>Royalties earned 135,000</i>
	<i>Balance due (black) 120,600</i>

Hertzka smiled ever so lightly. I heard the strains of a famous Tchaikovsky tune floating through the room:

*He just made money,
Took in the honey.*

He looked once more at the letter and the check. Then he pressed a button and called for his secretary.

"Don't say, 'Dear Mr. Krenek,'" he said, and gave the letter back to her. "Let's change it to 'My dear Master Krenek.'"

The Sweet Cup of Success

*J*ONNY SPIELT AUF
had been the first time that the great, the real success had swept like a hurricane through my tiny office at Universal Edition in Vienna. Never before had I known what it meant to eat the bread of real success. I had tasted only ersatz.

Many times in the past I had found myself sitting at my desk the morning after still another one of our innumerable world premières, staring blankly at the posters on the walls, in search of a slogan with which to tell the world that a new masterpiece had been born. While I waited nervously for the newspapers with the music reviews that were to furnish the ammunition for the battle, Miss Young would prepare the weapons: a huge pair of scissors and a pot of white glue.

Miss Young, Miss Helen Young, had replaced blond angel-face who once had helped me so efficiently to draw lines on paper when I had made my first testing steps in the music business. These lovely days had come to an abrupt end one morning in May when Hertzka entered my office in a hasty and ill-mannered way. The instal-

lation of Miss Young, a stately brunette and strictly business, was the immediate result of this rude interference with my privacy. It was, I am frank to admit, a wise measure from the viewpoint of an increased efficiency in my department, but it deprived me and, therefore, the readers of this book of a lot of harmless entertainment. In fact, after having read *The Hucksters* and discovering what other people in the music business *really* do during office hours, I am convinced that I would have had all the material to write a best seller if Hertzka had not replaced angel-face with Miss Young. The only feature which made Miss Young outstanding was her habit of showing disapproval of everything I did and of every letter I dictated to her by silently raising her eyes toward heaven, shrugging her shoulders, and then returning to her notes with offended resignation, obviously disapproving of so much foolishness.

At last the newspapers arrive. Miss Young opens the glue pot. I take the most important of the newspapers, the *Eagle*. The man who writes the music reviews for the *Eagle* can make and break a composer. All I need are a few nice sentences from him and I will be all right.

Let us see now: Amusements . . . Amusements . . . Amusements. (Why don't they print the indexes in alphabetical order?) Amusements . . . Here it is: Amusements, page 11. . . .

Radio . . . "Beautiful Budapest, a travelogue at the Criterion." Where is Music?

"Here it is," says Miss Young, quietly looking over my shoulder. "Don't be so nervous."

I hate that woman. Why can't I have angel-face back and be as nervous as I please?

Let's see now. "World première of new opera at Municipal Theater. Before a distinguished audience that, however, only partly filled the house . . ."

Blah, blah, blah.

"In the orchestra we noticed such notables as Mrs. Cornelius F. Shatterton."

Come on now.

"The title role gave us again a chance to admire the beauty of Mr. Culpizano's splendid tenor voice."

Who cares? He is wasting seven lines on Culpizano!

"Miss la Fleur, in the difficult part of Migraine, proved again that she rightly deserves to be the favorite of our local public."

She has been that for the last twenty-eight years. Eleven lines for La Fleur. When is he going to say something about the opera? Ah, here we are.

"The opera carries us back to the days of the French Revolution."

I know.

"When the curtain rises we see Migraine stretched out on a couch. With her is her chambermaid and confidante. Migraine does not feel well. She has, obviously, a headache."

So have I. The man uses up two columns and six lines to tell the contents of the opera. That can mean only one fatal thing: he does not like the music. But he has to say something about it. Here it is. Miss Young, give me a red pencil and the scissors.

"The composer has a few nice colors on his orchestral palette. The score is not without talent. . . ."

That means without talent.

"A few lovely tunes, unfortunately strongly reminiscent of Puccini."

Throw the *Eagle* out, Miss Young. It's just as well. Nobody pays attention to the old fool who writes music reviews for the *Eagle*. Nobody reads the *Eagle* anyway. Give me the *Inquirer*.

Amusements . . . Amusements. Amusements, page 8. Radio, Film, Art.

There is no Music on page 8. Must be a mistake in the index. Miss Young, will you look again through the *Inquirer*?

What, there is no Music? Look under Latest News. Maybe they print it under Latest News. "Flash: Sensational new opera, sure to take place of *Carmen* experts say."

It is not under Latest News? You can't find anything in the *Inquirer*? Give me that paper.

I go through the *Inquirer* from "A democratic newspaper founded in 1856" to News from the Shipping World. Nothing. The *Inquirer* did not review the new opera.

Miss Young, I am going to fix that sonofabitchexcuse-meplease. I'll fix him good. I'll fix him plenty. He did not review the opera.

But the *Sentinel* did, and the *News*.

Take that pencil, Miss Young, and take a ruler. Underline here, in the *Sentinel*:

"The third scene of the second act has a certain dramatic strength."

Take that sneer off your face, Miss Young. I don't care for your comments. Here, underline that sentence in the *News*:

"The public, obviously bored by the new opera, greeted the cast and the conductor with fervent applause."

Where is the *Eagle*? Fish that *Eagle* out of the wastepaper basket, Miss Young. How was that line about Puccini?

"A few lovely tunes, unfortunately strongly reminiscent of Puccini."

Now how does that read:

A GREAT OPERATIC SUCCESS. UNANIMOUS PRAISE FROM THE PRESS:

"Lovely Tunes"—the *Eagle*.

"Fervent Applause"—the *News*.

"Dramatic Strength"—the *Sentinel*.

"It reads all right," says Miss Young. She looks once more at the *Inquirer*, which has not even mentioned our beautiful opera. "Why don't you add one more line:

"The new opera left us speechless"—the *Inquirer*."

This time, after the triumphal opening of *Jonny Spielt Auf*, it was all different. When I came home from the exciting days in Leipzig I found my desk overflowing with headlines and news flashes. There it was, what I had waited for through all these years: the "smashing success of a revolutionary new score," "a new chapter in operatic history," "the most sensational success of a

new opera in many years." Smiling girls from *Vogue* in Paris, from the *Illustrated News* in London, from Moscow, Rome, and New York, were waiting, asking for pictures and begging for interviews and human-interest stories. There were editorials in the Sunday papers and boring analytical articles in musical magazines. And there was the best of all: violent attacks and outcries of protest in some of the conservative newspapers, just the right thing to whet the appetite and stimulate the interest of the people.

I was a victorious general with all the bulging arsenal of publicity at my command, but strangely enough, this time I had no need for it. This time there was no point in sending out press notices and writing pleading letters to harmless producers in Finland and Czechoslovakia, letters written with the pen of frustration in the ink of deceit. This time I did not write *any* letters. I just sat back in my chair while Miss Young opened telegrams and answered long-distance calls. The shoe, at last, was on the other foot.

After a few weeks I called in an artist and had him design a huge map of Europe. Each town that had performed or accepted *Jonny Spielt Auf* appeared on the map with a little Jonny on top of it. There were 114 Jonnies on that map, playing the violin, blowing the saxophone, dancing, singing, shouting, and waving their hats. One was climbing up the Eiffel Tower. One was boarding a ship in Le Havre, destination New York, where the Metropolitan Opera had just bought *Jonny Spielt Auf*, and there were Jonnies shouting in Russian,

in Hungarian, in Italian. The opera had been translated in eighteen languages. Its melodies and rhythms were plugged on the radio, fiddled in cafés, and whistled on the streets. The Tobacco Monopoly operated by the Austrian Government brought out a new cigarette, American brand and American package, and called it *Jonny*. And to top it all, a boisterous Prussian lawyer arrived from Berlin and bought the picture rights of *Jonny Spielt Auf* for Warner Brothers in Hollywood. They never made the picture, but their check was all right. It all was fantastic.

It would be easy for me to claim today that I had foreseen all this, had in fact planned it so, and had known that *Jonny* would be a smash hit as soon as I had first set eyes on the manuscript. The plain truth is, however, that I did not have the faintest idea. Neither did Hertzka know, or the manager of the Leipzig opera house, and Krenek himself most certainly did not know.

We were all "experts." But the fact is that experts in the theater know just as much as I or you or Dave down at the delicatessen. They don't know anything. Nobody does.

Humanity has gone a long way in unveiling nature's most secret and intimate laws. But nobody has ever succeeded in fathoming the laws of success and failure.

There is only one test for the success or failure of any theatrical production, and that is a performance in front of a paying, dressed-up, hostile, and critical audience. No experience, no formula, no "I know this will hit them, don't you remember last year's?", no "don't let

us repeat the mistakes we made in Boston," nothing can ever replace that damned audience.

It's like playing the horses. You can go out to the race track every morning, sneak behind a bush, and watch Beaurivage and Morning Dew and Always Last going through their paces. Morning Dew is always in front. What a horse! You look at your stop watch, and he is two and-a quarter minutes faster than any other horse. He has everything it takes: the strongest legs, the finest family tree, the proudest record, and the best jockey. He just cannot lose. And he keeps on winning every morning on that workout, but at the race he loses by eleven lengths to Always Last.

At the age of twenty-seven, of course, I did not know much about these basic facts of life. But soon I was to receive an object lesson of how blind fate deals out success and failure, and it is at this point that I should like to introduce another young man of my generation, born, as were Krenek and myself, in 1900 and about ready to take the jump into the limelight: Kurt Weill.

Weill is today probably the most successful of the many European composers who came to the United States during the last decade. He is the composer of *Lady in the Dark* and *Street Scene*; he is a distinguished member of the Playwrights' Company, sharing that honor with Maxwell Anderson, Elmer Rice, and Robert E. Sherwood. From Broadway to California he is one of the boys, and when you want to see him he has first to consult a calendar and will then ask you to be his guest

for lunch at the Oak Room of the Plaza Hotel on the second Friday of next month "unless I call you—I might have to go to Hollywood."

But back in 1927 you could not mention lunch in front of Kurt without being asked "when and where and why not today?"—and you cannot blame a young composer—for being eager to eat when he is a pupil of Ferruccio Busoni, the great Bach interpreter, composer, writer, and thinker. Busoni had introduced Weill to Hertzka, and to please the great Ferruccio, Hertzka had given Weill a ten years' contract with Universal Edition.

This sounds magnificent, but it wasn't. These resounding ten-year contracts put a strict obligation on the composer to submit anything he wrote during the next ten years to the publisher before showing it to anybody else. All they got for it was a handshake from Hertzka. There were no guarantees, no advances or monthly payments, and any money they were to get was to be earned by royalties. And royalties could be produced only by sales.

The music Kurt Weill wrote under the influence of the unsmiling Busoni was not the type that would easily show results when the fellows in the basement started counting stock at the end of the year. The music pleased Busoni, it pleased some of the music critics, but it did not make any impression on Mr. Brunner, our stock clerk. He was strangely unaffected by the higher aspects of musical life. Coldly he reported a sale of eleven copies of Kurt Weill's String Quartet when the year was over.

Hertzka had scores of young composers under these ten-year contracts. We, the boys behind the scenes, knew of course that these wonderful documents people would

take home and show to Mother under tears of joy did not mean a thing. As soon as a man had one or two failures we just kept on turning down his scores while he was still under an ironclad obligation to submit each of his new works to us, one after the other for ten endless, terrible years. To us Kurt Weill was just another man who had drawn a ten years' sentence from Hertzka. He was prisoner number 376, a man without a face but with a little asterisk to his name. The asterisk meant "Handle with care. Pupil of Busoni. Dangerous high-brow."

Once in a while, of course, one of the chain gang would suddenly break loose. His face would be restored to him, his number removed, and the asterisk deleted. I was present when this spectacular change occurred in Kurt Weill's status. It happened when I attended with Hertzka the first performance of a new opera by Weill, *The Protagonist*. He had written the music to a libretto by Georg Kaiser, a famous German playwright, and the fact that such a well-known author had written a story for a young, almost unknown composer was remarkable. In addition, the opera was bestowed the unusual honor of a first performance at the famous opera house in Dresden, birthplace of most operas by Richard Strauss. To have an opening night on the same stage where *Der Rosenkavalier* had made its first bow was quite something.

The Protagonist had a successful première and very good notices, but I had seen too many "artistic successes" to be impressed and was anxious to see what Hertzka's final verdict would be.

The next day we met Kurt in the dining room of the

Bellevue Hotel for lunch. The Bellevue offered two luncheons: a simple two marks' one and a fancier one, including fish as well as meat in the fare, for three marks. All these days before the opening night we had shared lunch with Kurt, and every day Hertzka had ordered three luncheons without fish. Kurt had never said a word, and who was I to clamor for fish?

This time, however, Hertzka called the waiter, asked for a menu, and handed it smilingly to Kurt Weill.

"What would you like to eat, Mr. Weill?" he asked.

Then I knew that Kurt Weill was a composer to be reckoned with in the future.

During the next few years we followed Weill's development with interest and active participation. He wrote a second opera with Georg Kaiser, this time on a comical, satirical subject, and while its success was still nothing to get really excited about, it definitely established Weill in the expensive-luncheon category.

Then one day in the spring of 1927 Weill wrote from Berlin, where he had settled down, to announce that he had completed his first full-length opera, that he had found a new collaborator who had furnished him with a splendid libretto, that this was going to be a sure-fire hit ("a second *Jonny Spielt Auf*"), and that all that was still wanted was to determine which theater should have the honor of first presenting the new opera on the stage. The title of the new work, he added casually, was *So What?*

This struck me as odd. Maybe, I thought, I am just

getting old and out of touch with things, but I would take a chance of being considered old-fashioned, and I decided to take a good look at *So What?*

We wrote Kurt Weill, politely and nicely, that we were overjoyed to learn that he had written a new opera, that the title was most promising, and that we felt that in order to do the thing real justice we should become closer acquainted with it. The best would be for him to come to Vienna and play the new opera for us.

He took the bait without so much as a blink. He wrote and asked for a round-trip ticket and would we pay his hotel expenses. We sent him a coach ticket and got around the hotel expenses by putting him up in Hertzka's attic.

Soon little Kurt Weill was sitting at a piano in Hertzka's office ready to play *So What?* for us.

Kurt Weill is as cold-blooded as a fish. I have seen him in many exciting circumstances (and I shall say more about those later), but I have never seen him excited. He always keeps his mocking little smile. His voice, slightly husky, never rises or falls. He has no artistic tempers, no outbursts, no breakdowns. He played his whole opera, softly singing with his veiled voice, and went on quite undisturbed, while Hertzka and I were following with the libretto this unheralded entry of *So What?* into the world.

After Kurt had finished we felt that there was only one thing to do: to make this first performance of *So What?* under all circumstances the last. And to kill it right here, mercilessly, and without any ifs and whens.

There are many ways in which to tell a man that you do not wish to publish his work. The paper shortage, of course, has been a godsend ever since the days of World War I. It has become a favorite guest in any publisher's house, and I am sure that I am speaking for all my colleagues when I say that we never, never wish to part from it. Only, it does not always work out.

One enterprising composer (it was actually a composer-ette, a woman composer—only women have that sort of killing persistence) called me a few days after I had given her the usual speech about the strangulating paper shortage that prevented us from printing her sonata for xylophone, contrabass, and flute to announce that she had succeeded in buying a whole carload of beautiful snow-white paper. It was all ready to be delivered and would I please give her the name of our printer. It would be there within the hour.

In an emergency like this you have to think fast. I found out there is one thing that will get you out of a tight situation almost any time after a stubborn man (or woman) has beaten down your arguments. It has taken me twenty years to work it out, and now I am going to give it to you for free.

You just sit back in your chair, take the manuscript, and say:

"I think you have written a wonderful piece of music. It has style, power, beauty. It should be published at once, and you certainly deserve a substantial advance. Of course I cannot make such a decision myself. I have to ask our board."

Now you wait a minute or two and let it sink in. The board. The power that makes music tick. Something big. Something mysterious. A chairman in a black coat and striped trousers. A room with a long table, solemn pictures on the wall, filled with dignified, anonymous gentlemen.

They all fall for it. They leave their music with you and go home happy and content. They are convinced that the kiss of death you have just given them was a kiss of brotherly love and a token of a contract to follow next week. Now you just let that manuscript rest on your desk for a few days, but be sure to thumb once through it: some wise guys put a hair or a piece of thin thread around it to find out whether it has been opened!

After a week or two you send it back and write the man a letter that the board, to your great disappointment and deep regret, could not see their way clear, etc.

There is, however, one other way to deal with such a situation. It is often hard and almost always unpleasant. That other way is to tell them the brutal, undisguised truth. If they can't take it, let them go home and brood and think that you are another of these blind fools or hardhearted businessmen who can't recognize a masterpiece when they see it. But if they can take it you will have done a man a great service and you might have made a friend for life. It's just a matter of courage and determination.

Well, I got up from my chair after Kurt Weill had finished playing the score of *So What?* and went over to the piano.

"Kurt," I said, and looked him straight in the eyes, "tonight you are going back to Berlin. Shortly after the train leaves Vienna it crosses the Danube. When you are in the middle of the bridge, open the window, take your score, and just drop it into the river."

Kurt looked back. He did not say a thing. He just took his music, put it in his brief case, and walked out of the room.

A few days later he wrote from Berlin. He had given the matter careful consideration. He felt himself that *So What?* was not up to his standard, that it was a transition work, linking his first period of Busoni-influenced classical writing to a very different kind of music he felt was slowly growing in him, that he was grateful for our harsh criticism and had decided to put *So What?* away, at least for the time being. He would not show it to anybody else.

There went a whole year of hard work, a score of five hundred pages, sleepless nights and days crammed with planning and writing. The hope of a whole year went to sleep in that desk drawer. It was the sleep of eternity because Kurt knew that "the time being" was from now to doomsday. This discipline of thought and outlook, this self-criticism and strength to take it, has ever since been for me the criterion of a real artist.

About a year later, in August 1928, Kurt Weill wrote us to say that he had completed the musical score to a play by Bert Brecht. Brecht was a German whose poems had put him in the front rank of the lyrical writers of

the day but whose dramatic output was mainly known by an unbroken record of political and artistic scandals. The new play, Weill wrote, was based on the old *Beggar's Opera* of 1728. Brecht had changed the plot and written new lyrics to make that old English play into a drama of the political and social tensions of the Germany of 1928, and Weill had composed a completely new score to replace the music Pepusch had written for the *Beggar's Opera* two hundred years ago. The new version was to be called *Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*) and was to be given a first performance at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin within the next few weeks.

The combination of that veteran of many battles, Bert Brecht, with the composer of *So What?* made Hertzka, who was anyway convinced that modernization of old plays were flops more often than not, most suspicious of that new enterprise. Reluctantly he decided to dispatch me to represent Universal Editions at the opening night, but I was to arrive at the very last moment. In other words, we were prepared to send a man to shake hands with the bereaved but not to spend money for a wreath or a few flowers. I was to be a silent attendant at a funeral.

I arrived in Berlin at eleven o'clock the night before the first performance and called Kurt Weill from the station. A sleepy maid told me that both Kurt and his wife were in the theater, rehearsing. I was not surprised. A rehearsal at eleven o'clock the night before the opening just showed that things were going exactly as we had expected. There was nothing for me to do but to buy a black tie.

In the meantime I took a cab and arrived at the theater at midnight. I found the stage filled with shouting people wildly gesticulating, yelling at each other, and only making common cause in bodily threatening the director, who outshouted everybody else. A huge piece of scenery suddenly descending with lightning speed and almost crushing half a dozen people to death put a sudden end to that outbreak of violence and obviously saved the director's life. The leading lady knelt at the ramp, screaming abuses at the conductor, who did not pay any attention to her. A sudden crashing chord from the band drowned her and everything else completely out.

Pandemonium was not limited to the stage. I saw excited groups debating in the orchestra and in the boxes. Smoke filled the air; crumpled papers, empty bottles, and broken coffee cups littered the floor. The producer, one Aufricht, rushed from the stage to the orchestra, from the orchestra to the debating groups, trying to pour oil on the waves. But he seemed to put the oil in the fire instead.

I went to look for Kurt Weill and found him quietly sitting in the orchestra, his mocking smile on his lips, as unconcerned as if he were just a disinterested outsider calmly enjoying the debacle of a crowd of complete strangers. I knew that it was not only his music he had to worry about. His wife, Lotte Lenya, was to play one of the leads in the show. It was the first time she was to appear in a big and important part. Kurt had about as much at stake as a man who had just put his last dollar on a roulette table. But he certainly did not

show it. He said he was pleased to see me and explained that they had decided to rehearse all night, that they had got as far as the middle of the first act, and would I just sit down and wait. Everything was going to be all right.

Ten minutes later the eternal law of theatrical discipline had restored some sort of peace, or at least an armed truce, and the rehearsal continued. After five minutes everything broke up again in shouts, tears, and despair. But as the night went on the actors one by one became too tired to rebel, the orchestra too exhausted to protest, and they all went through their paces again and again till it seemed like a bad dream, a nightmarish repeat of something you had seen before.

The rehearsal broke up at five o'clock in the morning. Many of the actors were too tired to go home. They fell asleep in their dressing rooms or backstage on a pile of clothes or just on the scenery on the stage. In the orchestra pit the timpanist had settled down on two huge kettledrums, and every snore made the huge drums tremble with an eerie and ghostly sound.

But there was no sleep for Kurt Weill, Bert Brecht, and the producer, Mr. Aufricht. They were surrounded by groups of excited men and women. These were their friends, the people I had seen before debating in the orchestra and the boxes and who had now come to give their verdict. They were all theatrical people, writers, actors, musicians, critics. They were all experts, and their opinion was unanimous:

"For heaven's sake, call it off. You are heading for a

sure-fire flop; you are risking your reputation, your money, your head. It will be the end for Kurt Weill; it will be the greatest of all Brecht's scandals, and it will mean that there will be a 'For Rent' sign on the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm within twenty-four hours. There is only one thing for the three of you to do: forget it."

The next morning (it was actually the same morning, of course) Weill, Brecht, and Aufricht decided to disregard the verdict of the jury of experts and to go on with the show. Within half an hour the actors were assembled, the eerie snorer on the timpani had been put back to life, the stage had been cleared of sleepers, and the trumpet player had been dispatched to make the rounds of the house and to wake anybody who might still be hidden somewhere, a prince charming with a horn. And again the grueling work of rehearsing began with people who were too tired to know what they were doing and who did not care any more, because by now everybody was convinced that tonight's performance would be the opening and the closing of the show. Aufricht had retired to his office, and I found him there with his lieutenants, working out a rehearsal schedule for a new play to be put into effect the next morning.

"If we are lucky," he said, "we can be ready in five days."

At noon the rehearsal was over and I went home.

Even under less trying circumstances there is little in human misery that surpasses the mental torture of the hours preceding an opening night. There is nothing for

you to do any more. You just sit, look at that clock in the living room, and see the seconds tick by and the minutes and these long, long hours.

At five o'clock you start dressing. You shave. You try in vain to put your hair in some well-groomed shape. You get out that tuxedo. An unexpected reprieve is given to you as you tear one of your shoelaces. You have to look for another pair, and it takes you five minutes to find them. For five wonderful minutes your mind is occupied with shoelaces.

But five minutes are only five minutes. The laces are in the shoes. The shoes are on your feet. You look in the mirror. You are ready. There is nothing more to do. You go into the living room and look again at the clock. It's five thirty-five.

That clock must be wrong. My God, that clock might be two hours late.

You jump to the phone and dial Time.

Bing . . . bing . . . bing . . .

"It is now five thirty-six," says a silver voice cheerfully over the phone. You sit down and read yesterday's paper.

At six you leave the house. You have decided to walk to the theater. You walk one block very slowly, deliberately slow.

You walk two blocks. What is your hurry? Don't walk so fast. Walk slow. You have two and a half hours to kill.

While you cross over to the third block a taxi rolls slowly by. You don't want a taxi, you have plenty of time, you have decided to walk, to walk slowly.

"Taxi!" a strange voice yells. Who was that? There is nobody around. The taxi pulls to the curb.

You get in, you sit down, and the same strange voice that just hailed that cab bursts out of you:

"To the Central Theater. And for God's sake, step on it."

At eight-fifteen you sit in your box and watch the crowd come in. It is a smiling, an unconcerned, a relaxed crowd. These people don't worry about the play. They sit down and begin to chatter. They are perfectly at ease. They talk about the weather, about the steaks they stuffed in their fat bellies before they came here, about mink coats, stock prices, about Cousin Mary's engagement, or about their own blasted sex life. While you watch them you remember these awful women sitting and clicking their needles and gossiping gaily while the aristocrats were executed in Paris in 1789. Just sitting there, knitting and talking about the weather, watching people, maybe music publishers, put on the guillotine.

"What was that click?" . . . "Just another head."

"On nous a servi un filet mignon délicieux chez Lindy's, Citoyenne MacCarthy."

Put that corpse away.

Who is next?

As the lights go out in the theater you turn around to look at the stage. You know every corner of it, every bit of scenery, every move an actor is going to make, and every rise and fall of his voice. Only a few feet of space are separating you from that fateful stage, but it now might as well be the Pacific Ocean. You are no part of

it any more. You have no way of communication. You cannot shout to them, nor signal, nor even whisper. You are out of it completely. You are just a spectator. Might as well take up your needles and start clicking and wait for that head to fall. Only, it will be your head.

As the curtain goes up you remember the hundred and one things you never got around to say. Now you know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you should have asked the author to change that corny line in the third scene. That line will kill everything. It will hit the audience like a bucket of cold water.

What is the matter with La Fleur? Why doesn't she sing faster? She drags; she is going to put them to sleep. *Please*, sing faster, you old hag. Sing faster. Can't you hear me?

That conductor is an infliction. I told them, I begged them not to take Krabutzki. He just lets that La Fleur drag the show to death. And that silly baton. Don't wave that baton so high, idiot, idiot, put that baton down.

Why don't they laugh? This is the scene where we all were sure we just would have bowled them over in their seats. But they don't move. Nobody laughs. They don't even smile. We have a flop. We have a flop. We have a flop.

Watch that latecomer. Somebody must have planted that latecomer. They must have paid him money, plenty, to get him to come in just when that beautiful, that tender, that endearing love duet begins. It has to be absolutely quiet in the house, everything, the whole evening, depends on it.

Tap, tap, tap.

You hear him walking down the aisle. Now he stops; good God, he stops. He talks with that bald-headed man in the seventh row: "Nice to see you here . . . At the Astor Bar after the show . . . sure thing . . . hello, Mrs. Bald-head . . . see you later."

Can't you wait till the love duet is over? Please, wait.

But he doesn't wait. He goes right on to the second row. The people get up. Two, four, ten. The whole row gets up. He can't find his seat. *There is no empty seat in the second row.*

"Excuse me." He goes back. "Sorry." The people get up. Two, four, ten.

Where is the usher? Don't they have ushers in the joint?

Tap, tap, tap.

Here is the usher.

"Let me see your ticket again."

It was all a mistake. It's the second row on the balcony. I can see that empty seat from my box.

Tap, tap, tap.

There goes the latecomer. There goes the usher. There goes the love duet.

And you are not alone in your despair. You cannot pull your hair, wipe your brow, or just collapse and have a good long cry. There are two more men in that box with you, two men who try just as hard to avoid your eyes as you try not to look at them, two men who suffer hell just as you do: the composer and the author.

Pull yourself together. Set an example. This show

doesn't really mean a thing to you. It's their show, not yours. You are just a publisher. You are a businessman. Come on, be tough, be a tough, tough businessman. Look at them. Smile. For God's sake, smile. But you can't smile.

And then, all of a sudden, you hear laughter. A big and heart-warming wave filling the orchestra and the balcony, rising, and bouncing back and dripping, splashing back and forth. And then you hear applause. You have well-trained ears. You know the applause that is like a real cut of steak: no bones, no skin, no fat; all meat, juicy, solid, nourishing. There are no substitutions. It's either it or it isn't. And this is it.

You look up. You see the composer and the author look up. And everything is all right. A masterful conductor, the great, the one, the only Krabutzki. La Fleur sings like a nightingale. A perfect performance. A lovely audience. A hit, a smash, a success!

It was thus that *Dreigroschenoper* made its triumphal entry and started its run of six hundred consecutive performances at Aufrecht's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin on August 31, 1928.

Two days later Hertzka arrived in Berlin and we went to lunch with Kurt and his wife, Lotte Lenja, who through her success in *Dreigroschenoper* had, like her husband, risen overnight to fame.

Hertzka was dressed in one of his old-fashioned black coats with two huge pockets hidden deep in two

huge tails. I shall never forget the touching charm with which the old man fished a bunch of crumpled violets wrapped in a newspaper out of one of these pockets and presented them to Miss Lenja.

And then he did something which nobody would ever have expected from him or from any other music publisher in the world. He searched again in the bottomless depths of his pockets and brought out at last a large sheet of cream-colored paper. He put it on the table. It was the ten-year contract, the "prison sentence" he had signed with Kurt Weill six years ago.

"This is our contract, Mr. Weill," Hertzka said. "As you know, it has four more years to run."

"I know," said Weill. The mocking smile had disappeared from his lips. He seemed tense and hostile.

Hertzka took the document and tore it into shreds.

"I think it is about time we made a new contract," he said.

A Bohemian Polka

OSCAR LEVANT in his book, *A Smattering of Ignorance*, states that no serious composer with the exception maybe of Richard Strauss or Maurice Ravel could make a living with his music. He intimates that only Hollywood-made music pays. Opera, however, has always provided composers with great incomes and complete independence.

Kurt Weill, for instance, chalked up forty-two hundred performances of *Dreigroschenoper* during one single year after its première—more than ten performances every day. He soon made a better and a much more secure living than many a man who walks the streets of Hollywood. Verdi and Puccini became rich on the royalties they collected on their operas. It happened to Ernst Krenek and to Eugène d'Albert, to Franz Schreker and to Leos Janaček, to Mascagni and Leoncavallo, to Massenet and Gounod, and even to Alban Berg, who completed only one opera, *Wozzek*, in his lifetime. And it happened with dramatic suddenness to still another man, to the Czech, Jaromir Weinberger, and to his opera, *Shvanda*.

The fate of this work has been different from many of the great and conspicuous operatic successes which I had witnessed and taken an active part in. *Shvanda*, with its merry tunes, has been one of the few operas from that dizzy period between the two wars that is still remembered.

I think it was Johannes Brahms who once, when asked what he considered immortal, said:

"A piece of music that is still alive after fifty years is immortal."

Nobody has ever stated more clearly the shocking mortality rate of success.

Just have a look at the daily sensational-smash-hit-super-colossal success: the screaming headlines, the sale to Hollywood, the author's appearance on Information Please, afternoons for tea and autographs, spreads in *Life* magazine, lecture tours, Pulitzer prizes, and money galore. And then, after six months or maybe a year, go and ask whether anybody still remembers the title, just the title of the book or the play, or if they still can tell you the name of its author—if ever they knew it.

The sensation of today is the oblivion of tomorrow. It comes with the wind and is gone with the wind.

Brahms, to be sure, was born in a period that moved slower and proceeded with care. To him, fifty years were well-nigh immortality. But to us? Give us ten, give us five years, just five short years of life for a book, a thought, an idea, a melody. Give us five years and you have earned the ivy of immortality!

Shvanda was first performed in 1927, and its tunes are still alive. You can hear the Polka and the Fugue on the

radio week after week. They are played by bands and high school orchestras, by wood-wind ensembles, accordion virtuosos, and marimba fans. They have passed the acid test of commercial immortality: they are being kept in the catalogues of the big recording companies where the grim reaper goes around year after year and mows and mows and mows.

It's a miracle that they ever got there. *Shvanda* had to win the most difficult steeplechase, and many times it looked as if it would break its neck and be out of the race for good.

The beginnings of its spectacular career were most unspectacular. What happened was just one of those everyday dramas that occur unnoticed and unheralded day after day in publishers' offices all around the world: Universal Edition in Vienna rejected the manuscript of an unknown opera which an unknown composer had sent in by mail.

Fellows who make the postman their messenger are easy cases for anybody who has been in the music-publishing business for more than three hours. In dealing with them you don't have to shield yourself behind the paper shortage or an awe-inspiring board. It is all very simple. You have three form letters, ready-made and fitting any occasion, and all you have to do is just pick one, put it in an envelope, and mail it.

Form letter number 1, also known as "So Sorry," expresses sincere thanks to the composer for having honored you by submitting his manuscript. It then describes in glowing, though general terms the high qualities of the score and states your deep regret that former com-

mitments prevent you from publishing it "at this time."

This letter usually is a flop. The recipient reads of course only the last three words, "at this time," and will invariably send his score back next spring, assuming that "this time" was really "this time." But anybody who is naïve enough to do such a thing simply asks for:

Form letter number 2, called "The Brush-off." The Brush-off points out to the composer that your publishing program has been determined for several years in advance and that you therefore are unable to do anything with his manuscript "without inflicting injustice on others who expect us to publish their music on a specified date."

This one is much better. "Several years" has an air of finality and leaves little room for a polite exchange of letters. A publishing program mapped out so far in advance shows that you are a far-looking businessman with a real plan and puts you almost on a par with General Eisenhower. The delicate hint at an injustice against his fellow composers makes the man feel like a heel. The Brush-off, therefore, in most cases, serves its purpose admirably.

There are, of course, always obstinate cases, and this is when you need:

Form letter number 3, which is called "Curtains"—and rightly so. It reads:

DEAR SIR (OR MADAM),

We regret that we are unable to publish your manuscript. If you will kindly send us the amount of—for postage it will be returned to you at once.

Very sincerely yours,

When Jaromir Weinberger sent the score of his opera *Shvanda* to Universal Edition he did not know it, but he really never had a chance.

The score was written with a thin, palish pencil, and any editor who is forced to look at such an eye-killing scribble-scrabble hates it before he finishes the first page.

Strike one.

The text was in Czech and therefore unintelligible unless you were a Czech—and who is? And furthermore: Weinberger had never written an opera before and was unknown to us.

Strike two.

Operas based on a national subject might be nightingales within the borders of their homelands but are usually turkeys as soon as they try their wings abroad.

Strike three and out.

Our editor, who had bad eyes and did not speak Czech, submitted his report, Hertzka marked it “Brush-off,” and the score of *Shvanda* went back insured for ten dollars.

Many a composer would have withdrawn from the race at this point, and odds were, heavy odds, that *Shvanda* would die an untimely death in Jaromir Weinberger’s closet in Prague. So far as we were concerned, it was forgotten and dead. How could we remember all the operas we had rejected and returned? Who remembers cow number 2586 in the Chicago stockyards?

But about a year later, in April 1927, I received a long-distance call from Prague. The man on the other end of the line was Max Brod, music critic of an important newspaper, distinguished novelist, writer, composer, music

lover, and generally a man of high standing in musical and literary circles.

Long-distance calls in Europe are something upsetting and startling. It took me years, after I had come to the United States, to adjust myself to the relaxed ease with which people in New York pick up a phone, ask for a number in Hollywood, get their party within seventeen seconds, and then sit back in their swivel chairs and discuss the weather and did the fellow on the other end sleep well. He didn't? Why?

In Europe a long-distance call is made only in an emergency, and even then people will usually cancel the call before it comes through and write a letter instead. And then they will think once more and write a postcard. (Telegrams, likewise, are sent only in matters of life and death. Many Europeans who came to America decades ago still become pale when the Western Union boy rings the bell. It can only mean that Uncle Eddie had a stroke.)

Max Brod's long-distance call (all the long distance from Prague to Vienna) could therefore mean only that something of paramount importance had happened.

"I think I have discovered a gold mine," came Brod's voice over the phone. "Last night I heard at the Czech National Opera here in Prague a new work by Jaromir Weinberger called *Shvanda*. Tomorrow night will be another performance, and you must come and hear it. It is a magnificent piece, and I predict another world success."

Brod's reference to another world success was startling

news. A few years earlier he had persuaded Hertzka to publish the opera *Jenufa* by Leos Janaček, and it was not long before this work had become a great international hit, crowned by a spectacular performance at the Metropolitan Opera, with Maria Jeritzá in the title role. Brod had made the German translation of *Jenufa*, and I understood, of course, that his recommendation of *Shvanda* meant that he again wanted to have a cut of the cake as translator and that his enthusiasm was not just an act of brotherly love for Jaromir Weinberger and Universal Edition. But ever since the days of *Jenufa*, whatever Brod said about a new opera deserved careful attention: it carried the weight of a fifty-thousand-dollar success with it.

I therefore went at once to see Hertzka, who had a toothache and was in a bad mood. He called stiffly for the file on Jaromir Weinberger and produced the depressing report of our editor, the man who hated pencil scores and did not speak Czech. Hertzka never liked to change his mind, particularly not when he had a toothache. It was decided to disregard Brod's appeal.

(These toothaches behind the tremendous wilderness of Hertzka's whiskers always had something eerie, almost frightening about them. They were not a matter for a dentist's drill and pliers. Spooks, screaming spooks hiding deep in the forest.)

Brod seemed disappointed but composed. He was an old hand in the game and he played his cards like a master. Two hours later he called again to say that he had just learned that a representative of Bote & Bock was to

come for tomorrow's repeat performance of *Shvanda*. Bote & Bock was a German publishing house. It had recently entered the opera business with too much activity for Hertzka's comfort, who was looking with mounting misgivings at this threat to his monopolistic position.

I asked Brod to hold the wire and rushed into Hertzka's office.

"Brod is on the phone. Bote & Bock is sending a man to Prague to see *Shvanda* tomorrow," I cried in pitiless disregard of his pain-distorted face. "He still has a ticket for me for tomorrow night's performance. What do you want me to tell him?"

So of course the next night I was in Prague and took my seat next to Max Brod in Prague's beautiful opera house, the old Narodni Divadlo. I had no idea what *Shvanda* was all about and I did not speak a word of Czech.

In a French or Italian opera you can always guess your way along. There is *l'amour* and *prestissimo*; there is *c'est la guerre*, *l'honneur*, *patria*, and *misterioso*. Even in a Russian opera an occasional *nitchevo* will calm your mind like a friendly light that tells you that all is well and that you are not alone in a sad and hostile world. But Czech is utter and complete darkness.

Brod, who speaks German and Czech, although he speaks Czech like a German and German like a Czech, began at once to whisper bits of translations into my ear. It did not take long for our neighbors to view us with irate eyes, and I suddenly remembered with a pang the

story of the Czech policeman who watched a drowning man from a bridge across the Vltava.

"Help, help," the man cried out—in German.

"You should have learned swimming, not German, my friend," the policeman said, and continued serenely on his beat.

The Vltava was only a stone's throw away from the theater, and there was I, alone with twenty-three hundred determined Czechs and attracting increasing attention. A mustached neighbor who either resented our whispers as a disturbed music lover or our German as an outraged Czech, or probably both, turned suddenly around and let go at us with a long-drawn *pshhh*. It sounded like a bullet, but it had a very unexpected effect. Several others at once protested his interference with their enjoyment of the opera by turning against the *pshhher* with their own resounding *pshhhs*, and more and more *pshhhs* leaped up all over the house like forest fires, till Brod wisely decided to cut out his coaching and to let me drift for myself.

By then I did not need any help any more. I was elated by the music and amused by the story which, as is the story of any good opera, was easily understandable if you just watched the stage and let the music do the rest. I decided right here that I wanted *Shvanda* at once and that I was not going to take any chances with Bote & Bock or anybody else, although I had by now found out that the story of Bote & Bock was nothing but a successful hoax.

After the performance was over I went to dinner with

Brod and the author of the libretto, Milos Kares, an official of the Prague radio—and it was here that I first met Jaromir Weinberger.

He was a small, very thin man with a worried, heavily drawn face that looked much older than the thirty-one years he actually was. He had thin white-blond hair and the hands of a child, small, transparent, and very white.

Before I could even mention the business on hand Weinberger began to deliver a lengthy and concentrated lecture on the political situation in Czechoslovakia, Europe, and the world as a whole. Although it was a picture of utter gloom that he painted, I could not help feeling that he thoroughly enjoyed his prophecies of doom and disaster. I was the only newcomer at the table, and while I was listening attentively I noticed that the rest of the party was neither impressed by nor even interested in the sermon. While he went on to elaborate on his theories of catastrophe with a patient fury and cold passion I began to understand that Weinberger's fate was the fate of every Cassandra since the days of Troy: they speak the truth, but nobody wants to hear it.

In the years to come and whenever Weinberger and I met in Prague or in Vienna, in Paris, in Berlin or in New York, I would always open our conversation at once with a sly "And what do you think about the political situation?" This would invariably produce an enthusiastic and exuberant "The situation is very simple: it is completely catastrophic. Everything is lost."

All I had then to do was to voice a feeble protest such as, "It can't be as bad as all that," to get him where I

wanted him and to make him deliver another one of his brilliant speeches on international politics, philosophy, and religion. What Weinberger said at these innumerable occasions was never pleasant, but it was always fascinating and, as I found out later, he was almost invariably right. With his cold, penetrating analysis of trends and facts, he would take from your eyes the nice rose-colored glasses through which you looked at the world, would throw them on the floor and smash them to bits. He made you see what you did not want to see.

One day in 1935 we were sitting in a café in Prague with a few friends when Renato Mordo, manager of the German theater, suddenly got up and left the table in disgust.

"After you listen to Jaromir Weinberger for half an hour you are ready to commit suicide," he cried.

But all that Weinberger had said was that he expected the Germans to invade Czechoslovakia within the next five years and to hang Renato Mordo if he still was there. He proved to be wrong about this one. The Germans came after only four years, and Mordo escaped two hours before they came to arrest him.

Weinberger's bold understanding of political developments is astonishing, considering the fact that he is a composer. Most musicians are amazingly ignorant of what is going on in the world. Ever since Beethoven said so in his Ninth Symphony, they have a general idea that all men are brethren and that all men are, or at least should be, good. But here the matter rests. Poets and painters have always been in the front row of politics

and revolutions, but musicians seem to prefer ivory towers where they compose and promote their music and, last but not least, resent the success of their colleagues.

After Weinberger had completed his lecture at our after-*Shvanda* dinner with a final and triumphant "All is lost," I suggested that as long as doom was imminent we might as well complete our business without further delay—tomorrow might already be too late. Everybody agreed.

Our meeting took place at the fabulous restaurant, Piskáček, one of the celebrated eating places of prewar Europe. They printed their tremendous list of dishes on huge pieces of cardboard, and it was on one of these oversized menus that I proceeded to draft a contract between Universal Edition, party of the first part, and Messrs. Jaromir Weinberger, Milos Kares, and Max Brod, party of the second part. There was venison steak, *knedliky*, calves' brains, and boiled potatoes on one side of the document that was destined to make musical history, and copyright clauses, royalty terms, and the solemn signatures of composer, author, translator, and publisher of *Shvanda* on the other side.

The next morning I departed for Vienna and presented this unique document to Hertzka.

He took it and looked at the menu.

"I don't get it," he said. He had no sense of humor during office hours.

I turned it around, and he read through the contract.

"Well," he said, handing it back to me, "it's your baby. You know, of course, that we turned it down last

year. We usually know what we are doing. I haven't seen the opera. You have. Good luck."

I took my menu and walked to the door. Before I got there he spoke again.

"The next time you go and see a new opera, please take a piece of paper with you."

"Yes, sir," I said.

A month or two later a bulky parcel arrived from Prague. It contained the complete piano score of the new version of *Shvanda*, revised and made ready for publication by Kares and Weinberger and translated into German by Max Brod. All that remained to be done was to print it.

This seems as good an opportunity as any to put in a word or two about the queer and shockingly old-fashioned way music is published. It is, believe it or not, done in exactly the same way it was done at the time when Johann Sebastian Bach engraved his own music (and by doing so completely ruined his eyes) two hundred years ago.

Music engraving and love-making seem, so far as I can ascertain, the only human endeavors that have not made any progress since the time of Bach. Love-making, as a matter of fact, while it still seems basically unchanged, has undoubtedly heavily deteriorated. Bach had twenty children. Twenty. And look at—well, never mind names—just look at any composer of today.

The engraving of music is done in our days by exactly the same process which was used first by one John

Walsh in 1720. Every note and every slur and rest and piano and forte has to be stamped and hammered on a metal plate *by hand*.

The printing of books has progressed rapidly and successfully with the progress of modern techniques, and to compare a modern linotype machine with the way Gutenberg set up his first Bible is like comparing the engine of the Superchief with a stagecoach. But the complicated pattern of music, the fact that no page is ever like any other page, has defied all attempts to standardize or mechanize the process. It has still to be done by hand, by a very skilled hand. Today there are only about fifty men in the United States who know how to do it.

A music engraver's shop is devoid of any machinery. All you see are a few men working very concentrated, facing the light, and all you hear are the clicks of their punches and hammers.

When the engraver gets a piece of music his first task is to determine exactly how many pages it will take, how many bars he will be able to put on one page without crowding it or making it appear empty, and to lay it out so that each page ends with a bar. He then begins to sketch the music in very fine lines on the plate, going from note to note with a compass and lightly etching the whole piece in the plate with a steel pencil. This plate is a composition of zinc, lead, and antimony and is about one sixteenth of an inch thick.

After he has sketched all the music roughly on the plate he takes a staff liner, a tool with five cutting edges, evenly spaced, and cuts the five staff lines for each system

into his plate. Not even the staff lines follow a regular pattern and can be put into that plate before the engraver gets it.

He then gets his tools ready and proceeds to stamp and hammer the various symbols in the plate. He has tools of eight or nine different sizes: from the superlarge so-called kindergarten size (used for children's instruction books) down to the smallest size, used for modern scores or choral music. Each of these eight or nine different sets of tools consists of more than one hundred different dies, made of very hard steel and, incidentally, all made in Germany. There are whole notes in the set, half notes, quarter notes. Whole rests, half rests, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second rests, sharps and flats, *fermatas*, repeat signs, square notes, arpeggios, up-and-down bows, mordents, grace notes, trills, staccatos, *p's* and *f's*, all the clefs, *dal segnos*, and pedal signs. And there is, of course, a complete set of letters, one straight and one in italics, and a complete set of figures.

Each note, each letter, each figure, and each sign has to be stamped in the plate in reverse: everything on the plate running from right to left. It is a negative which will later be a positive when it is put on a stone or an offset press for printing.

After all the stamping is done the stems to each note and the bar and other straight lines are added with a ruler and the slurs and other irregular accidentals are drawn in free by hand.

Whenever the engraver makes an error or when the composer makes a change after he has seen the first

proof, every wrong note has to be hammered back from the reverse side of the plate till the surface is completely smoothed out again, and then the plate is turned around and the correct note or notes or bars or—damn that composer—pages are stamped in.

It will take a skilled man two to three hours of intensive and concentrated work to finish one plate of normal difficulty and size. He can do three to four plates a day and will do less if it is difficult and complicated work.

Being difficult and complicated, it is of course very expensive—and this brings us nicely back to where we started: to the story of *Shvanda*.

By the time the score had been engraved and printed I had spent about two thousand dollars of the company's money on "my baby." It was time to think about how to get it back, and I proceeded at once to send copies of the opera to the managers and conductors of opera houses all over the continent, with a letter in which I told them how fortunate they were to be offered that great, that unique, that sensational new opera, *Shvanda*—and would they please let me know by return mail when they intended to put it on.

The weeks that followed were the worst I have experienced in a long career, a career so brilliantly studded with defeats, rebuffs, and disappointments. Nobody, simply nobody wanted my baby.

"Well, how is *Shvanda* this morning?" had become the stereotyped greeting with which Hertzka began, day after day, to hand me the morning's mail, which meant the morning's rejections. I knew the kind of smile he had

put on, a smile that had made braver men than I take their hats and go, never to return. I watched people whispering in corners and breaking it up when I approached. I was a marked man.

In desperation I wrote a letter to my old friend, Joseph Turnau, manager of the municipal theater in Breslau. Turnau was a Czech himself. I put my cards squarely on the table. I told him all about my belief in *Shvanda* and about the fact that nobody else shared it. I wrote him that Clemens Krauss, who at that time was in charge of the opera house in Frankfurt, had written me to say that *Shvanda* would never be a success outside of Czechoslovakia, that it was a typical Czech story, incomprehensible for anyone who was not familiar with its background and history, and that I might as well forget it. And I put in my letter a personal appeal, explaining my predicament and asking for a helping hand.

Turnau, without any doubt, at once recognized the possibilities of the opera but of course would not say so. What he said was that as a Czech he was willing to take a chance in producing a Czech opera, and that as a friend he would be glad to help me to get my baby started. But as a theater manager he offered me the lowest royalty terms ever paid for a new opera. I accepted at once, without any attempt to bargain, and on December 16, 1928, the opera, *Svanda Dudak*, now *Schwanda, der Dudelsackpfeifer*, had its first performance in Breslau.

About half an hour before curtain time I learned that Baron von Franckenstein, manager of the famous Munich Opera House, was in Breslau. I rushed to his hotel and

caught him just before he was to go out for dinner. Reluctantly he yielded to my plea and came to the theater. After the first act he sent for me.

"There is only one thing one can do with this opera," he said.

My heart sank.

"And what would that be, Baron?"

"Produce it—and at once. When can you let me have the music? I want to bring it out in Munich next month."

I went to the post office and sent a wire to Hertzka. I knew that the battle was won.

The Great Flood

*Y*_{ES}, we all had a wonderful time.

We were sitting on life's sunny lawn, playing with toys: with successes and failures, with opera houses and concert halls, with music festivals and string quartets, with singers and dancers. Shvanda played his merry Polka for us and Jonny led the band.

While we were playing and listening to the music that floated gayly over the lawn the clouds began to gather at the horizon and the great thunder began its growl, very far, very low.

We did not hear it. We thought it was the kettledrum, and the Polka went on.

Once in a while we looked up, but the clouds seemed so far and the sun seemed so real. We returned to our toys. The party continued.

And then one day the storm was here. The great thunders crashed out the music, and in the flash of the lightning we could see the band abandon their instruments in horror and flee.

The guests had disappeared. The forgotten toys were

still strewn over the lawn when the rains broke loose and the waters began to rise.

1. April Showers

Vienna, 1920. This is a concert of new music presented by the Society for the Private Performance of Music. The room is packed. Most of the people present are members of the society or friends of members, and every member is a worshiper of Arnold Schoenberg, founder and organizer of the group. These concerts unite the disciples who watch eagerly the latest experiments in the complicated chemistry of modern music.

Four solemn-faced men are on the stage playing—nay, celebrating with the intensity of priests—a string quartet by Anton von Webern, one of the most radical followers of Schoenberg. His is a new kind of music; queer and elusive sounds, fragments of melodies, chords and forms never before encountered. It is soft music, soft like the soundless flickering dance of the will-o'-the-wisps. The audience is very quiet, strained, concentrated: a congregation watching four priests perform their rites.

Suddenly there is a slight shuffle of feet. You look around. It seems to come from the left corner of the room. You notice a man sitting near that corner who does not seem to belong here. The man looks different. His clothes, his haircut, his face, everything is different. He is a stranger in that crowd.

Now the man begins to laugh. It is a loud, forced laugh,

an evil laugh, meant to sound evil. A laugh in a concert hall can sound like the hiss of a bullet. This one pierces the music like a cannon shot. The people, shocked out of their trance, turn around and look at him.

The man gets up. His face is twisted. It is a violent face, pale, full of hate and fanaticism.

"Boo. . . . Boooo. . . . Boo!"

Have a good look at that face. It is the face of a man who did not come here to listen but to hate. The face of a man who knew before he ever came here that he wasn't going to like what he was going to hear.

Or maybe it is the face of a man who was told not to like it, a man who takes orders. His orders today were to boo. Tomorrow his orders might be to shoot. Have a good look at that face. Remember it, don't forget it. You will see many faces like this in the years to come.

But this is only one man and this is only 1920. The sun is still shining and the clouds pass on.

There is a flash of white-blond hair, a large face marked by a flaming scar, thick glasses over shortsighted eyes: a towering six-foot giant is approaching the lone man who had gotten up from his seat to boo. The man sees him and sits down.

The giant is Dr. Joseph Polnauer, avenging angel guarding the gates to the paradise of modern music with the flaming sword of belief and the irresistible strength of conviction. All throughout the day this mighty warrior serves peacefully as the librarian of the Austrian State Railroads, cataloguing and dusting volumes and reports nobody would ever ask for. But at night the unobtrusive

Dr. Jekyll emerges from the remoteness of his books and docket to become the battle-scarred Mr. Hyde of music.

He has the reputation of a great fighter. Everybody all over town knows him. People come to these concerts not only to hear the music; they come to see Dr. Polnauer in action. They can see him now.

He pushes his way through the row where the intruder has just sat down. The man tries to pretend indifference. Accusingly he looks at an innocent neighbor. But he does not fool Polnauer. Struggling and protesting, he is lifted from his seat by two irresistible fists. He is carried to the door.

Polnauer returns, alone. He takes a sweeping look at the crowd and goes slowly with heavy steps down the aisle and back to his seat. He sits down. The players on the stage take up their instruments. The music continues.

Was that thunder that made the earth tremble ever so lightly, ever so faintly? No, it was the kettledrum.

Go back to your toys, children. The music goes on.

2. *Rain*

Berlin, December 1925. Last night I saw, for the first time, a fight in an opera house. It was not a fight on the stage with sparkling swords and howling choristers. The battle went on in the audience. I myself was in it. I applauded, and a man turned around and tried to slap me.

I had seen a face like his before, years ago in a concert

hall in Vienna, the same twisted face filled with hate and violence. But I didn't know the man. I had never seen him before, but I had to raise my arm to protect myself.

When I looked around I saw fights all over the audience.

The occasion was the first performance of Alban Berg's *Wozzek* in the opera house Unter den Linden in Berlin.

I had been introduced to Alban Berg a short time before in Hertzka's office in Vienna.

When I first had started my job it had always been a great thrill to meet a composer. Composers were famous people, and I approached them with the reverent feeling and the hero worship that fills the heart of a teen-age girl when she asks Van Johnson for his autograph. But very soon this all had become a matter of routine. The glamour had dissipated in the grind of daily business, and composers became just customers. None of them was really Superman, I found, but quite a few went through life like Lil' Abner.

So when Hertzka called me into his office to meet still another composer, a Mr. Berg, I was unimpressed and unexcited.

But when I entered the room I knew at once that this was different. I felt myself, as never before, in the presence of a towering personality—and I have never lost that feeling whenever I met Alban Berg. I was to meet smarter men, men who wrote music easier to sell, smoother to understand, and much more popular. I met men more important, more famous, and more successful. But I

never again met a man who would enter a room and fill it with his presence, completely and inescapably, like a light fills every corner and penetrates the dark: bright, warm, reassuring, obscuring anything and anybody else around him.

I am sure that if Alban Berg had not been a great composer he would have been a great poet or a great philosopher or a preacher and healer and consoler of humanity. He could never have been just one Alban Berg, born in Vienna in 1885, died there in 1935.

He was unusually tall but always slightly stooped, as if bowing in grace and humbleness to the world. His hands were large, white, and sensitive, covered by a fascinating web of blue veins. He had a beautiful face, a smiling, almost mocking mouth. He had great warming eyes that always looked straight at you, knowing and penetrating eyes that would demand the truth and nothing but the truth—and would always get it. You would forget all your diplomacy and all your smart little tricks whenever you spoke to him and you would become just human and honest and yourself. But he wasn't a saint or a hermit. He was full of life and he loved to tell jokes, and when he told one of his doubtful stories he would roar with delight.

For years I used to visit him during the summer in his house at one of the beautiful lakes in the Austrian mountains. There he was, a peasant among peasants, writing his complicated scores, digging his garden, going for long hikes with his beautiful wife, and always a friendly host to his guests, who had ample wine and food and some of Berg's unprintable stories before he took them to his

studio and softly closed the door. And behind that door was the altogether different world of his music.

He never changed. While he went up the ladder of success and became a figure revered and recognized throughout the world, he never became arrogant or even detached. He was always the same, pleasant, friendly, and very human.

Maybe he *could* never change because he had always been great. Nothing that happened to him from the outside—money, honors, success—could ever add to this greatness or change the heart-warming light of his mind and his soul.

When he died suddenly from blood poisoning in December 1935, it was not just that a famous composer had met an untimely death.

The light of Alban Berg's smile had gone out forever. We felt the shadows, and the night was cold.

Wozzek, that later was to become Berg's most celebrated work, had been occupying his mind for many years. In 1914 he had seen a performance of a play, *Wozzek*, by the German poet Georg Büchner, who had died in 1837, only twenty-four years old, and had left this work unfinished. But the twenty-five scenes which the young poet had completed had all the gripping power and consuming passion of a great drama and made a deep impression on Alban Berg.

Wozzek is a story of jealousy and violent death, exciting as is the tale of *Carmen*; in fact, the two are full of similarities. But the passionate, sparkling love of the

Spanish girl from the sunny South is here a grim, dark Nordic passion, and the playful soldiers of an operatic Spain are sadistic and stupid symbols of German militarism.

Berg had selected fifteen scenes from Büchner's play and grouped them in three acts, five scenes to each act. After years of concentrated labor the most complicated opera score ever written had been completed in 1921. Nobody dared to perform or to publish it. Berg printed the score with the help of friends at his own expense.

At last, in 1923, three fragments from the opera were performed at a music festival in Frankfurt. Most people did not "understand" the music, but they felt its tremendous impact. They felt that Berg had probed behind the words of the poet and that that strange music was mercilessly revealing the emotions and unconfessed thoughts, the passions and desires, the hope and despair behind these words.

Two more years had to elapse till the opera was to be heard on the stage. Erich Kleiber, music director of the Berlin Opera, had undertaken the grueling task of more than one hundred rehearsals and had at last succeeded in performing *Wozzek* on December 14, 1925.

This date made musical history. Not only because *Wozzek* was later to become a milestone in the development of opera. Not only because the music had caused the most violent reaction, the strongest eruption of hate I had ever seen. Not only because I had encountered again that hateful face, already half forgotten, and had been slapped by a man in an opera house.

It made history because the next morning we read for

the first time the word *Kulturbolschewism* in a German newspaper. It was a dangerous word, and we were to hear it time and again in an infernal crescendo. It was something new. It meant that men who wrote that sort of music or performed it or liked it or just tolerated it or who painted a picture or wrote a book or made a speech or thought a thought or dreamt a dream "they" did not like were branded as Bolshevists, Communists, enemies of the state and of society.

Music had been dragged into the profane realm of power politics, and it was to stay there to the day when the books would be burned and the scores thrown into the flames.

Fascism had come out in the open with threats and violence. The target seemed to be an opera, a work of art, a piece of music. But in reality that was only the target *before* the target. It was the testing ground for the new powers. They were gunning for bigger stakes.

For a long time I could not forget that distorted face that had turned against me and that hand, ready to hit. The evil echo of fights and the brutal sound of curses still lingered in the air.

Then it seemed to fade away. We thought it had gone. We were fools. We returned to our toys.

3. *Heavy Thunderstorms*

Leipzig, April 1930. I came here to see a new opera by Kurt Weill and Bert Brecht, the composer-writer team

that had startled the world with *Dreigroschenoper* two years ago. This is the same Municipal Opera House in Leipzig where we went through the sweeping success of *Jonny Spielt Auf* only a few years ago. It's the same house, the same singers, the same stage manager, the same conductor.

But the people in the audience are not the same. They look different. These are not the same Leipzig burghers who had enjoyed *Jonny* and had lustily applauded its tunes and pranks. This time there is high tension in the air.

On our way to the theater I had seen crowds of Brown Shirts on the street. The square around the opera house had been full of them. It was the first time I had seen them. They carried banners and placards, signs protesting against the new opera by Weill and Brecht. People on the street, people in uniform were protesting against an opera before it was even performed! Men who looked as if they had never been inside an opera house and did not know what they were demonstrating against screamed their indignation from the street corners.

There was that face again. The same face I had seen in Vienna in 1920 and in Berlin in 1925. But now it was multiplied by the thousands. Now it was wearing a brown hat.

The opera, too, was different. It was an aggressive opera, full of tension of its own. It was called *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*.

Mahagonny is an imaginary city founded in the desert in a make-believe America by three desperadoes, fugi-

tives from justice. It is the city which was built so that everybody who would come there would be happy, the city where everybody was to be permitted to do whatever he pleased. You can do everything in Mahagonny. There's only one thing you mustn't do: you mustn't be without money. The great, the terrible crime, punishable by death, is to have no money.

But this lawless city where everybody should be happy and have a wonderful time so long as he can pay for it turns out to be the city where everybody is heartbreakingly unhappy and lonely, suddenly realizing bleak despair and deadly emptiness. What the people saw on the stage was their own collapsing world. They saw themselves in Mahagonny, frantically but in vain searching for a grain of happiness.

"This city of Mahagonny," the chorus lined up at the footlights shouted straight into the audience, "this Mahagonny is only because there is no hope on earth, there is no justice, there is no place to go, there is no refuge, and there is no salvation. Because there is nothing"—and they would repeat "nothing," screaming its hollow emptiness at the people in the theater—"nothing you can hold onto."

The day before the première, during the dress rehearsal, I had already sensed a strange and unknown tension in the theater. After the rehearsal I went to see Gustav Brecher, the conductor and boss of the opera house.

"I have the feeling that we are playing this opera on a powder keg," I said to him.

Brecher was a very cultured man. He came from a

refined, highly educated family. He was a man concerned with books, music, pictures, and with his lovely home. He was a man born fifty years too late. He did not seem to understand what I meant.

He said he was a musician concerned with a score. He was proud to produce a new opera. He was not interested in politics. There was nothing unusual going on, nothing to worry about.

But the next night there was plenty to worry about. We had heard a rumor that the Nazis, not satisfied with having their men on the street demonstrating against the opera, had actually purchased whole blocks of seats for the performance, and it was easy to see when we got there that these rumors were true. It wasn't long before violent demonstrations began. The noise, the shouting soon drowned out the music. Some of the actors could not stand it any more. They stepped out of their parts, rushed to the rim of the stage, and shouted their protests against the intruders.

The performance broke up in pandemonium.

This was different from what had happened at *Wozzek*. This was a purely political demonstration, carefully planned and executed with skill and efficiency.

The men responsible for it knew well what they were doing. The next day, already their successful interference with the performance of an opera made headlines all over Germany. It advertised, better than a parade or a political meeting could ever have done, the growing power of fascism and the fact that its reign had now begun in earnest.

Other theaters that had announced *Mahagonny* hastily withdrew it from the repertoire after what had happened in Leipzig. All this was free advertising for the Nazis and made a deep impression on foe and friend. But it was much more than that. The men who had instructed their henchmen to go and boo and kill an opera knew what other people still did not know and were slow, much too slow, to learn. They knew that liberty is indivisible.

Liberty is indivisible. In 1928 the opera, *King Roger*, by Karol Szymanowski, Poland's most prominent composer, was produced in Duisburg in the German Rhineland. It was a harmless opera, harmless in its story and very harmless in its music. But it caused violent outbreaks of protest, demonstrations in and around the theater: the Nazis were out in force to protest the performance of a Polish opera in Germany. The Poles, they shouted, were suppressing Germans, the Poles prevented Germany from regaining Danzig, the Poles were to be shown that Germany was back on her feet. The demonstrations succeeded. The opera was banned by the police for security reasons after one performance.

Ten years later the German Army invaded Poland.

You can't single out an opera. You can't sacrifice one bit, one tiny, insignificant bit of liberty. Liberty is indivisible.

In 1930 the German Government, in protest against "unbearable anti-German actions" in Czechoslovakia, suppressed every Czech book, play, and piece of music all over Germany. No works by Smetana, Dvořák, or Wein-

berger could be performed by any German radio station, concert hall, or opera house.

So what? people would say. What does an opera mean? So the Germans won't hear *Shvanda* any more. So a few hotheads in Prague will make speeches in Parliament. A storm in a musical teapot.

But in 1939 the German Army occupied Czechoslovakia in protest against "unbearable anti-German actions." You can't compromise liberty. Liberty is indivisible.

In 1931 the Prussian state closed down Otto Klemperer's Kroll Opera in Berlin. It was the opera house that had become a storm center through its progressive repertoire, the style of its productions, and the dynamic figure of its leader. The Prussian government at that time was a Socialist government. Again the Nazis picked an opera house that was not to their liking for a show of strength—and again they won. The government in Parliament compromised with the Nazi party. The hotly contested Kroll Opera was sacrificed in exchange for some political concessions from the Nazi representatives. Why fight for an opera? Let's shut the thing down, forget it, and have peace. Let's dismiss a few dozen high-brows. Opera, the theater, art have no place in the realm of realities.

But liberty is indivisible. Today it is an opera you sacrifice to fascism, tomorrow a book, a year later the free-masons, the Catholics, the Jews, the state, the whole edifice of human relations. In 1931 the Socialist Prussian government threw Klemperer's Kroll Opera away to appease the Nazis. In 1933 the Nazis took over Prussia and

imprisoned and killed the men who had thought they could compromise. You can't compromise liberty.

A demonstration against an opera was nothing to worry Gustav Brecher when the Nazis made *Mahagonny* their test case in 1930. But five short years later Gustav Brecher and his wife shot and killed themselves after the conquest of an opera house had become the conquest of a continent.

Liberty is indivisible.

4. *The Flood*

On January 31, 1933, Baron von Plotz, manager of an opera house somewhere in Germany, took a picture of Paul von Hindenburg from the wall of his office and replaced it carefully with a huge colored print of Adolf Hitler, who had become head of the German Government twenty-four hours ago.

The baron stepped back, took an admiring look at the picture, and snapped to attention. He raised his right arm.

"Heil Hitler," he said.

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in," Von Plotz shouted.

The man who came in was Karl Gruber, conductor of the opera house for the last twelve years.

"Sit down," Von Plotz barked, while he goose-stepped behind his desk and stiffly took his seat in the huge oak chair.

"I have asked you to come here to discuss the operatic

repertoire for the next few months. These are great times, Gruber. We have to prove ourselves worthy of being the leaders of this great opera house. We have to prove ourselves worthy as good Germans, carrying our great traditions in a great, a very great, future. What do you have to suggest?"

"I have something very wonderful to suggest," said Gruber, opening his huge brief case. "I have here the score of a new opera by Paul Hindemith. It is called *Mathis der Maler*, and it is the most important work by Germany's most important young composer. We can begin rehearsals next week, and I have tentatively scheduled the première for——"

"Hindemith," Von Plotz interrupted. He had leaned back in his chair and had let the other man talk. But now apparently he could not stand it any more.

"You really mean Hindemith, Gruber?" he repeated.

"Yes, of course, Paul Hindemith."

"You have always been a very naïve man, Gruber. Maybe as a musician you had a right to be naïve. But I must give you fair warning. These are no times to be naïve. You'd better wake up, and soon. I don't think we will perform *Mathis der Maler*. Don't you know that Der Führer does not like Hindemith?"

Gruber looked up. For the first time he looked away from his music and straight in Von Plotz's face.

"You should know," Von Plotz took up his lecture, "that the Führer was in Frankfurt in 1924 and spent an evening at the opera house. What he saw was an opera, *Murderer, Hope of Women*. The text of that so-called

opera was by Oskar Kokoschka, a writer and painter whose completely distorted mind makes him unbearable to the new Germany, and the music, my dear Gruber, the music was by Paul Hindemith. What the Führer witnessed was a brazen, destructive attack on everything that is holy to German spirit, German womanhood, German tradition. The Führer has never forgotten that night."

Gruber let the score of *Mathis der Maler* slowly drop to the floor. He thought of the little house he had built himself on a lake high up in the mountains. He had two children. He had a small savings account and life insurance. He was getting along in years.

"Well," he said, "it doesn't matter. Let's forget Hindemith. I have something else, even more important. Alban Berg is working on a new opera, *Lulu*, based on a play by Frank Wedekind."

"Berg? I have heard his *Wozzek*, Gruber. What is more, I produced it. I mean I was forced to produce it, forced by Communists and a bunch of freemasons and Jews. This man is a pupil of Arnold Schoenberg. His music is poison, poison, Gruber. There is a *Kulturbolschewist* if there ever was one. And *Wozzek*—why, the man dares to criticize a German officer!"

"It was not Berg, Baron, it was Büchner who criticized. He wrote the play. He died in 1837."

Von Plotz looked at him, very cold. "Berg is out. What else?"

"Bohuslav Martinu has a new ballet."

"Martinu? Never heard the name."

Von Plotz opened his desk drawer and took out a little

book. It was marked "Strictly Confidential" and showed a huge swastika on the cover.

"Organization, my dear Gruber," chuckled Von Plotz. "I've been keeping this little black list here for two solid years already. Of course it was not to be used till The Day. But now the day is here and it comes in handy. We don't have to lose any time. Now let me see, Martinu. Here he is, your Martinu: 'Served in the Czech Legion and fought against the Reich in 1917.' He is a traitor, Gruber. He fought with the Russians."

"But the man is a Czech."

"You don't expect me to perform music by Czech traitors at a German opera house?"

"Darius Milhaud." Gruber's voice was now very tired. He looked old and crestfallen.

Von Plotz kept to his booklet.

"Milhaud," he said, "a Frenchman and a Jew."

"Ernst Krenek."

"An ardent Catholic, goes to church regularly, wrote many articles in defense of Austria's independence."

"Béla Bartók, a great composer, honored all over the world."

"A liberal, an internationalist, a freethinker, an anti-Fascist."

"Shostakovich."

"A Red, a Communist, how dare you——"

"Stravinsky."

"Another Bolshevik."

"Stravinsky is an émigré from Bolshevism. He fled Russia in 1921 and never returned. He is a White

Russian," said Gruber, very low and with a weak and trembling voice which sounded strange to him.

"He is a Russian," Von Plotz shouted with crushing finality. Gruber slowly put his brief case down. It was empty.

"Is that all?" Von Plotz said with a hostile frown. Gruber was silent for a moment. Then he took a manila envelope from his pocket.

"I have here a letter from a certain Fritz Dull. He says he is a composer and has written an opera. He did not send me the score, but he did send me a lot of documents."

Von Plotz took the sheaf of papers.

"Dull," he said, "Fritz Dull. The name sounds all right. A good German, no doubt. Here is his birth certificate . . . his parents' marriage license . . . extracts from the church records . . . his grandparents . . . his wife's cousins . . . his cousin's wife . . . Splendid, splendid."

Von Plotz reached for the phone.

"Get me Fritz Dull in Munich on the phone. Priority call. Official business."

He put down the receiver. "This is magnificent, Gruber. I knew we would have an important world première this season. This is simply wonderful."

"But, Baron," said Gruber, "we haven't seen the opera yet, the score——"

"The score? I don't have to see his score. I have seen his birth certificate."

I arrived in New York on March 10, 1938.

The next day Hitler invaded Austria.

While I was walking down Fifth Avenue for the first time, the German Army marched down Vienna's Ringstrasse.

While I was entering the offices of Boosey and Hawkes on Twenty-third Street in Manhattan to report for work, three storm troopers entered the offices of Universal Edition in Vienna and asked for me.

They did not come to pay me a friendly visit. They had a car waiting downstairs with its motor running.

An Old Friendship

MY FRIENDSHIP

with George Antheil began on the very day we met in Paris in December of 1927. George himself describes our first meeting in his book, *Bad Boy of Music*, a work which I highly recommend because it says the nicest things about me. I suggest you get yourself a copy and begin reading on page 205, where it says, "This was the famous Dr. Hans Heinsheimer, director in chief of the Theater Division of Universal Edition of Vienna," and keep on reading to page 343, where the author comes to the following fitting conclusion: "In his profession Heinsheimer is among the best." I don't want to prejudice anybody, but honestly I just love to read those passages.

George describes in detail our business relations, beginning with the wild years when his opera, *Transatlantic*, was first performed in Germany, and continuing up to the recent days when I helped him to launch his brilliant symphonies and exciting concertos on a successful career in America and abroad. But this has been much more than a business association between a publisher and a composer.

When I first met him I did not speak much English and he spoke almost no German. Boski, his Hungarian-German-Viennese-French-American wife, would act as interpreter. Our letters, particularly, were something to remember. He insisted in writing his in the most abominable German, while I used mine as exercises in basic English. It is a pity that this correspondence has been lost to posterity.

Soon we would spend summers together in a little house George had rented in Cagnes-sur-Mer, a French village between Nice and Cannes, high on a rock, overlooking the blue Mediterranean. This village, populated by French and Italian peasants and fishermen, had none of the traces of the swanky splendor associated with all the other near-by places of the Côte d'Azur and had become the center for a flock of American expatriates. They lived there, summers and winters, strangely if not crazily dressed, and, so far as I could see, obviously unaware of the fact that there were barbershops and beauty parlors only a few miles away in beautiful Nice.

These people would enter our cottage at all hours of the day or night, sit down on one of the few chairs or on the floor, and after a little while would leave just as suddenly and unprovoked as they had come in, without saying good-by or hello. The girls looked like boys, the boys looked like girls. None of them seemed to do any work.

This, then, was my first contact with Americans, and for the well-organized and probably slightly old-fashioned mind of a German-Austrian young man with an office and regular working hours, they were a strange and

disturbing sight. But George knew the life stories of most of them, the reasons why they were here and why they looked and acted the way they did, and he would explain all the little tragedies and frustrations that had brought them here. And he kept telling me how little they had to do with the real America.

Our conversations by then had become easier because I understood him and his English, and if you understand George, you can truthfully say that the worst is over in your linguistic troubles. We would spend whole nights talking. These were the kinds of talks that warm a man's heart, the fire in which a friendship is cast; lovely talks on music and art, on politics and business, on women and books, talks on the dark present of Europe and the uncertain veiled and mysterious future of America. Boski and Traute, my Viennese girl friend, would sit outside in the roof garden, looking at the southern stars and waiting in vain for us to emerge for some fresh air. Fresh air is cheap, but the talks of two friends are rare and precious.

In the morning Boski would serve George his American breakfast of shredded wheat and puffed rice, and day after day I would keep on telling him that I resented them as a barbarian and childish form of nourishment. Civilized people would breakfast on eggs and rolls and coffee. Did you think then, George, that twenty years later I would sit in your house in Hollywood eating puffed rice and oatmeal while you—I don't know why—were feeding on coffee and rolls and a soft-boiled egg?

And do you remember the winter you and Boski spent in Vienna? You had found two grotesquely furnished

rooms at the apartment of a very aristocratic lady who maintained the fading splendor of her carpets and easy chairs in the midst of the red-light district, a dreary fenced-in island of frustrated dignity in an ocean of vice. The baroness (or was she a countess or princess or even a former empress?) was always dressed in black silk. She had rented the rooms, forced by bitter necessity, but she still considered them her very personal domain and would enter at any time without so much as a knock at the door to see to it that everything was all right, that the slip covers were not removed from the velvet chairs, and to make sure that the wild Americans and crazy bohemians did not indulge in orgies. Everybody was scared stiff of her, and nobody ever thought of throwing her out. I can still hear your flustered "*Ja, Frau Baronin,*" and "*Jawohl, gnädige Frau,*" after twenty years of revolution, Hitler, and war.

And do you remember the day when Klari, Boski's sister, came to visit us from Budapest and when the two of us sat down at the piano to entertain her and the other girls with some beautiful piano duets, brilliant pieces by Diabelli and Heller, "The Calif of Bagdad," "Eury-anthe," and other childhood memories? We were just playing "Zampa," with vigor and screams of delight, when Klari, leaning dreamily against the old-fashioned stove, let out a terrible yell. Her dress had caught fire. Boski and Traute rushed her under cries of terror to the bathroom, while we, stupefied but collected, kept on playing, just switching from "Zampa" to Wagner's flaming "Feuerzauber" as an appropriate musical background

for the occasion and ending it up with the cooling, watery strains of "Rheingold" when we heard the water pouring in the tub next door and knew that everything was all right. Yes, George, those were the days.

George Antheil and I were both born in 1900, only a few months apart in time, but four thousand miles apart in space. Everything in our backgrounds and in our history had been different. His father was an American businessman in Trenton, New Jersey. My father was a German doctor in Baden-Baden. Our language, our thinking, our upbringing, the very fabric of our bodies and minds, were different. But ever since we met we have been friends; we could always rely on each other, and what we said and thought and felt meant everything to the other. When George left Europe in 1932 it was not the end of our friendship. We kept it up in letters to the time when I wired him my arrival in New York the first day I had set foot on American soil. Through all these years we grew older together, and while each of us changed, we changed together.

I know we shall remain friends till we shall sit in two rocking chairs on the porch and watch our grandchildren making nasty faces at the two boring nuisances. Let's go inside, George. It's getting cold.

As soon as I arrived in New York, Boski and George began urging me to come and see them in Hollywood, where in the meantime they had settled down. I was, of course, only too anxious to go, not only because I wanted to see the two of them again and be introduced to Peter,

who since had been added to the family, but because it was a chance to visit Hollywood. Ever since the advent of the sound film back in 1926, Hollywood had become a point of increasing interest to many of the composers I was working with, and I felt that after having spent a good part of my life among operas, symphonies, and piano sonatas it was high time for me to become more closely acquainted with this new center of streamlined musical activity. How many people ever hear a symphony or an opera? Two hundred thousand, five hundred thousand, a million? But any class-A picture coming out of Hollywood plays to well over fifty million in the U.S.A. alone—and if you think of the people who will hear it in France, Timbuktu, or the Province of Haidarabad in India, you arrive at a figure that staggers the imagination. I had traveled the length and breadth of Europe to hear an opera or to be present at a music festival. It was time for me to see Hollywood.

And there was one more reason why I had become anxious to make the trip. I had slowly, but with increasing firmness, begun to adopt a growing distrust toward the attitude of sneering contempt displayed against Hollywood by many of my composer acquaintances. They would describe it in word and print as a dreadful place, completely and basically inartistic, as a bad town which you would not even mention at the dinner table while ladies were present, as a money-crazy hellhole that was to be shunned like the plague by anyone who considered himself an artist. But whenever I discreetly and carefully interrogated these super-moralists (or their wives, who

were simply trembling with indignation and contempt) I found out that most of them, if not all, had tried very hard to get a job in Hollywood but had met with failure. Try as I would, I could not discover any composer who had rejected an offer from Sam Goldwyn with the proud and independent gesture of the perfect artist. I found only those who had never received one. They all were piously praising the dullish beauties of the heaven of pure music after they had been refused the key to the hotly desired vices of hell.

Who, then, were the men who had obtained admission? How did they look? What did they do, think, feel, and plan? What made the music tick that was to be heard by the millions of the world, and who decided what I myself was to hear in my little neighborhood movie in Kew Gardens, how I was to hear it, when and why? I had to find out myself.

Before long I found myself on George Antheil's patio high up in Laurel Canyon in Hollywood, inhaling the bitter smell of giant eucalyptus trees in the cool breeze coming down from the mountains, and playing with Open Eyes, George's deformed little mongrel whom he lovingly calls "the finest specimen of a pure Mongolian fish hound."

The patio with its beach chairs in red and bright blue and with the charred barbecue hearth always faintly smelling of charcoal and the delicacies of shishkebab, the little house painted in soft blue and gay pink, the tables and chairs and the walls inside decorated by George himself with sad-looking pathetic faces and surrealistic fig-

ures, the old telescope which had been the pride of our French ménage and which was now pointing toward an American sky, still disclosing Jupiter's moons and the mysterious brilliant beauties of Venus—it all brought back Cagnes-sur-Mer, the house there, the air, the view on the mountains and the sea, the days of leisure, the nights filled with talk, the smells and dreams, back from the gray, forgotten past.

But I was not at the Côte d'Azur, day- and night-dreaming among expatriates and sipping *vin du pays* at the little bistro at the Hôtel des Colonies. I was right here in America, only a few hundred yards from busy Sunset Boulevard, a mile or two from the billion-dollar empires of M-G-M and Paramount, Warners' and RKO, Republic and 20th Century-Fox.

I had not come here to play with Open Eyes under the eucalyptus trees.

Good-by, Open Eyes. I am taking a ride down the canyon.

I'll have a good look at Hollywood.

Hollywood; or, the Bases Are Loaded

HOLLYWOOD produces close to five hundred new pictures every year, five hundred pictures with an average length of eighty minutes. At least half of these forty thousand minutes of entertainment are accompanied by music. Some twenty thousand minutes of music are being composed, orchestrated, recorded, and played to a potential movie audience of eighty-one million in the United States every year. If you would play all this music continuously (and may God forever prevent it), it would go on for twelve days and twelve nights. This is music production on a scale never attempted before.

The times when a movie score was made up of bits from Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, and Rimsky-Korsakov are over. Most of the music you hear today, to be sure, still *sounds* like Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, and Rimsky-Korsakov, but it isn't. It is music originally composed just for the purpose of being used in a film, composed by men who knew before they wrote the first bar that the music would live only as long as the picture: six weeks, six months, maybe a year. They knew that most of the music would

never be noticed by any one of the millions who were to hear it on all five continents. They had, in fact, to make every effort to plan and to write it so that it wouldn't be noticed. It must never interfere with, never detract from the picture.

The fact that a picture score is so closely associated with and integrated in the picture and has little if any life of its own has resulted in the strange fact that, of the thousands and thousands of pages of music written for the film, almost none has ever succeeded in stepping out from the screen and leading a happy and successful life as an independent work of art. In this respect again picture music is quite different from any other music. A great many scores, originally written as music for a ballet, as operatic music, even as incidental music for a play, have taken a permanent place in the concert hall. But nothing of real significance and nothing of any permanence has come from the pictures. Picture music is background music, and when we say background music, we mean just that.

Aaron Copland, for instance, has created an imposing number of successful and brilliant scores in the concert field. His music has been recorded by the great orchestras, it is played constantly, it is published, it is a great and unchallenged success. But none of his picture scores has ever been accepted as equal to the music he has written for music's sake.

The remarkable thing, however, is that these scores are *first-class scores when you hear them with the picture.*

Here they are absolutely up to his finest and highest standard.

Everybody told him that it was a shame to let all this beautiful music just sleep in the storerooms of RKO and Sam Goldwyn. Once he gave in, against his better judgment, and wrote an orchestral suite for concert use based on his music for the picture *Our Town*. This is lovely music, and whoever has heard it on the screen is not likely to forget it. But when it was played in a concert we realized that the music had not come to life, that it was still mysteriously hidden in the picture, that it was impossible to take it away without damaging and destroying it.

Franz Waxman, one of Warners' wonder boys, once asked me to come and see him at his dream castle in Mulholland Canyon. It's one of the houses where you get the feeling that Louis XIV of France, in his Versailles, was actually living in the slums. Waxman is a fine composer; he has an excellent background and studied music from its very foundations. It seems that every Friday when he gets "that check" from Jack Warner something deep within him cries out for the better things of life and he remembers nostalgically the days when he wrote fugues and symphonies in an unheated attic in Berlin. These moods are common in Hollywood, but they usually don't last too long. A second look at that check—and things are back to normal.

Waxman played one of his overtures for me. I had heard the piece before in the picture *The Horn Blows at Midnight*. It was a full-sized overture with a brilliant

cornet solo, and while sitting and watching the picture I was sure that it would make a fine piece for any symphony concert.

What he played now was a record of the overture which had been made at the studio while they were actually recording the piece for the picture. The music, therefore, was *completely identical with the one I had heard* and had so thoroughly enjoyed. But now I realized that I had not only heard it; I had *seen* a picture at the same time. Now, minus the picture on the screen, I could scarcely believe my ears. It didn't seem the same score any more. It was the lifeless ghost of a piece which had been full of life and blood and vigor when I heard and saw it in the movies.

Waxman, I am sure, felt so himself. So we had a very nice talk about his problem, which is the problem of everybody who writes music in Hollywood. He would have to make a decision. He would either write the music he wanted to write or get Jack Warner's weekly pay check and live in his castle on Mulholland Palace. I know that he is doing all right every time I see his name flashed on the screen, by that single credit line that spells "Success and Swimming Pools."

For centuries composers wrote music for music's sake. They wrote it to be heard, not to be taken in subconsciously while your eyes are glued to a picture, but to be heard with your ears open and your eyes closed. They wrote ambitious music that strove to be great and to live forever. No such dreams of immortality will enter the office of a Hollywood composer. His music is different in

its purpose, in its texture, in its form, and in its technique. This is why it has to be looked at with different eyes, listened to with different ears, and judged in a different frame of mind.

While he might be inferior to the man who writes a string quartet or an oratorio, when it comes to dreams of greatness, in one respect the Hollywood composer knows he will beat them all: he knows that he is writing for the biggest audience any composer ever dreamed of since the cave man cut himself a piece of bamboo, drilled a few holes in it, and became the world's first flute-playing composer. Even the radio composer who proudly claims that his music is played over a nationwide network to millions of listeners knows only that it is played, but he never knows if it is *heard*, and no poll or rating can ever give him security.

A friend of mine, who used to deliver sophisticated talks over the radio on the social and cultural implications of music, once told me how he felt about his audience.

"I always wish," he said, "that there could be a huge switchboard in the studio. For every radio tuned in there would be a little light. Jack Benny is on the air and the whole board is brightly illuminated. But now the announcer steps forward. 'You will now hear a talk by Mr. James B. Research on "The Problems of Counterpoint in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century."' All the lights suddenly go out. There isn't one bulb burning. The people have spoken. I don't have to make my speech. I go home and everybody is happy."

The people, if they could make themselves heard,

might well speak up like that when a new symphony is announced over eighty-five stations and thus silence the man who flatters himself into being enshrined in the hearts of millions of his fellow citizens, while his music is floating, a poor frustrated ghost, through empty space. But the movie audience has no such recourse. They are defenseless, engulfed in a constant and unceasing stream of music, and they have to take it, no matter whether they want to hear it or not. They can walk out all right. But if they want to see the picture they have to face the music. There is no escape. Music is the lavishly ladled-out gravy without which no film dish will be served. It is for the picture like the air you breathe. You don't notice it. You never think of it. But just take it away and see what happens.

2.

That music was essential to complete the visual impression produced by a moving picture on a screen had already been accepted in the early days of the silent film. The elaborate scores of background music splashed over the sound films of today are all grandchildren of the lonely pianist who played in the wings of a nickel-odeon theater in the Arizona desert while Mary Pickford was loving and dying on the screen. Instead of being scoffed at with smiling contempt, he should have a shrine in every sound-film studio of today and should be treated with the respect due a venerable ancestor.

The silent movies in these seemingly primitive days already had their scores. They were different from the sound band of our times, but they were scores, nevertheless. Only they were not made in a scientifically equipped, air-conditioned, and streamlined laboratory in Hollywood but in a dingy projection room on Broadway in New York City.

Whenever a new picture arrived from Hollywood, completely silent, of course, but finished and ready for release, a phone would ring in the office of one of three men; James C. Bradford, Moe Mintz, or Max Winkler.

"Two o'clock this afternoon, Moe," a voice would say.

At two o'clock Moe would sit down in an easy chair with a pad, a pencil, and a flashlight, and the latest Harold Lloyd or Rudolph Valentino picture would appear on the screen. He had it all to himself, taking it in in lonely majesty like Ludwig II of Bavaria enjoying a private command performance of *Götterdämmerung*.

Two hours later Moe pressed a button, the lights flashed on, and he emerged. The pad was now covered with a list of musical titles.

The next day this list was printed and rushed out to every movie theater in the country that was to play the picture, whether it employed a hundred-man orchestra in New York or Hollywood or just a single organist or piano player. There were a few big orchestras, thousands of smaller ones, and twenty-five thousand organists waiting for it. It was a detailed breakdown of all the music to be played during the showing of the

picture and was called a cue sheet. "Open with 'Dramatic Suspense' by Andino," it would begin. "At 'No, darling, don't shoot,' switch to 'Mysterioso Dramatico No. 22' by Borché. Keep on playing till the villain shoots. Watch for shot. Shot has to be fired by man in orchestra. After shot, *tacet*¹ till girl dies. As soon as villain turns and flees, begin 'Hurry No. 33' by Minot. Watch for police whistle to be blown by man in orchestra. We supply whistles at seventeen cents C.O.D."

Moe, Max, and Jimmy got ten dollars for a minor picture, twenty dollars for a class-B, and twenty-five dollars for a super-colossal production. But soon their versatile minds realized much more tremendous possibilities. It had been an accepted practice to recommend Mendelssohn's "Fingal's Cave" to give the impression of water and waves, or the Andante from Dvořák's "New World Symphony" to paint a lovely rural scene. But the cue-sheet boys, as they proudly called themselves, soon decided to shelve this time-honored custom. Never mind Mendelssohn and Dvořák. There were enough smart boys on Broadway who could write a water scene or cowbells on the meadow any old day. And Moe, Max, and Jimmy went into the water-and-cowbell business themselves.

They commissioned and published hundreds and thousands of compositions designed to serve as accompaniment to moving pictures. Out of their experience as

¹*Tacet* means silence. But so religiously would the men follow the cue sheet that many messages like this one were received: "You have sent me all the music for *Ben Hur*, but the *tacet* is missing. Kindly rush by special delivery."

"spotters" they knew exactly what was wanted. An inexhaustible flood of pieces by composers whose names nobody had ever heard before was printed; a completely new literature was created and put on the market by the cue-sheet boys, whose word was law to all the thousands of orchestras and little bands who never had the time to see a picture before they had to play to it, and who had to order week after week the music prescribed by the cue sheet and published by Moe, Max, and Jimmy. The cue-sheet boys were sitting pretty.

Max Winkler soon became the biggest of them. In 1925 he put the finishing touch to his sprawling empire of Dawns, Dusks, and Furiosos by commissioning Erno Rapee to write for him an *Encyclopedia of Music for Pictures* which he soon advertised under the proud slogan: "As essential as the picture." It lists some twenty thousand titles of music. It begins with "Abyssinian music, Aeroplanes, Aesop's Fables (see Comedy pictures), African (see Cannibal), and Agitato," a section listing 157 titles from "Agitato No. 37 'for Fights and Riots' (Publisher Max Winkler) to Agitato No. 49 'for General Confusion and Tumult' (Publisher Max Winkler)," and it goes all the way down to "Witches (also see Spooks and Gruesome), Yodl (also see Swiss and Austria), Zanzibar and Zoo (also see under Various Animals)," which brings the book to an appropriate end.

Five hundred pages of the book are devoted to the listing of these twenty thousand pieces, and to look at them today is like looking at a prehistoric graveyard—although they died only twenty years ago. But on a few

pages the author gives some general ideas about how to illustrate a picture with music. Let us just pick something at random. We could take the paragraph on love ("It will often happen that a situation on the screen requires the love theme being used for an extraordinary length of time"), but never mind love if it takes so long. I prefer villains.

The villain (says the *Encyclopedia*) ordinarily can easily be represented by any *agitato*, of which there are thousands. Distinction should be made between sneaky, boisterous, crafty, powerful, and evil-minded villains. A crafty villain who does not exhibit any physical villainy in the course of the picture can be easily described by a dissonant chord being held tremolo and very soft. If the villain happens to be of the brute type, he indulges in lots of physical activities, a fast-moving number would be more apt. Sometimes you have a villain whose power to do evil is mighty but he achieves such evil deeds without any physical activities, in which case chords, slow and heavy, should be a proper synchronization.²

The next time you go to a movie watch the music around the villain, won't you? We might laugh about the hats or airplanes of 1925. But did we really progress so much?

Max Winkler is still dwelling in the beautiful past like a king in exile.

"In 1926 I sold three hundred thousand dollars' worth of music to the moving-picture theaters in the U.S.A. and Canada," he will tell you. "In one year we sold four thousand copies of the *Encyclopedia*." "And in 1927?" His face saddens. "In 1927 we sold music for

²Copyright by Belwin, Inc., New York, 1925.

three thousand dollars and two copies of Erno Rapee's book. Two copies! We had to throw out thirty tons of printed music in one afternoon."

This is what the advent of the sound film did to Max Winkler, James C. Bradford, Moe Mintz, and to the twenty-five thousand organists who played in movie theaters all over the United States.

3.

Today music in Hollywood is written by more than one hundred composers who live there and who all are members of a strange, almost secret society, the S.C.A., the Screen Composers Association. These are the people whose names you see flashed on the screen during that long-drawn-out bore called the main title, while you unwrap your candies and watch that sailor in front of you getting into a convenient and relaxed position to neck his girl. As long as these composers are small you will see their names just for a fleeting second, together with ten different others of co-producers, assistant conductors, costume designers, and the men responsible for the color on Betty Grable's fingernails. But soon you will see that their names become larger and you can watch the composer rise from a poor five thousand dollars a year to the proud fifteen hundred dollars a week, to swimming pools, chauffeurs, and houses high up on the crest of the canyons, when you see their screen credits increase in size and tone volume till at last they appear in splendid

isolation and under the thunderous flourishes of brass and percussion:

M U S I C
BY
GOLIATH M. COLOSSAL

Many of these composers are permanently employed by a studio, and such big companies as M-G-M, Warner Brothers, Paramount, RKO, Universal, and Fox have a staff of three to six composers under contract. Many of them write as many as ten pictures a year. They have offices, assistants, and secretaries.

Others are free-lance composers. They are called in from time to time and engaged for a single picture or for a series of scores. All of them, however, whether they are slaves in an office at M-G-M or a proudly free-lancing prince, they all are jealously guarding what they consider their very personal domain, ready to repel any intruder from the outside. They have developed the art of writing music for a moving picture from the days of the *Agitatos*, *Furiosos*, and *Oriental*s to a technique which has made music an important part in the construction of a picture and a very essential component of its success. The piano player in the nickelodeon of the Arizona desert has advanced to a position where he is considered by the producer, the director, and the studio as the fellow who can make or break a picture.

Max Steiner is not only probably the most famous and most successful composer in Hollywood today, but he has been there longer than anybody else and was the first one to apply the principles on which Moe, Max, and

Jimmy had feasted, in a new, successful, and history-making way to the sound film. He himself told me a story which describes strikingly the vital importance of music—background music—for a moving picture.

When Steiner had started his career in the early thirties, Marion C. Cooper produced a picture, *The Lost Patrol*, directed by John Ford. This picture, which later became a classic and is still mentioned as one of the few films that made history, dealt with a group of men lost in the desert, and one after the other was ambushed and killed by Arabs. The picture had no love story, there was no woman in it, and when they showed it in the projection room everybody in the preview audience recognized the mastery of John Ford's direction, the perfection of each player, and the general artistic importance of the picture; but the experts felt at once that in spite of all that the picture had no real tension, no real interest. For the public this was just a bunch of men fighting in the sand dunes and being picked up one by one by the Arabs. But the Arabs were not there. They were hidden, invisible, and the public in that projection room could never see any of them. They saw only sand dunes and men falling, but they did not see the enemy and there was no tension, as all the danger was only a make-believe danger and not one they could really grasp.

Mr. Cooper saw this very clearly, and it was he who suggested that Max Steiner *should paint in the Arabs with music*. This he did, and the picture became a huge success. Steiner had succeeded in putting Arabs on the sand dunes, thousands of them. The public, of course,

still did not see them, but they knew all of a sudden that they were there, that they were real, dangerous, deadly. All of a sudden the suspense that had been missing was there.

An audience can indeed be influenced to an almost incredible degree by music. The composer who knows his business is a *play doctor* of highest repute—and as the body he is called for to operate on is worth between one and five million dollars, his importance and fees are similar to the ones of the surgeon performing an operation on a Rockefeller or a Vanderbilt.

Miklas Rosza, who recently rose to prominence in Hollywood, told me another incident which shows even more clearly what music can do to a picture. *The Lost Weekend*, which won more Academy awards than any other picture, was first shown in a preview to a large audience. I must tell you at this time that most of the music is not even written and definitely not recorded at the time of such a preview. In order to have some musical background to the picture it is run with what is called a preview track. This is music taken from old pictures and put together on a sound track to run together with the picture at a preview. The music is chosen just to cover somehow and in a very indefinite and sketchy way what is going on on the screen.

At the very beginning of *The Lost Weekend*, as some seventy-five million people in this country will remember, a camera slowly wanders over the New York sky line to be focused finally on a window. A bottle is hanging out of the window, and after a little while Ray Milland

comes to the window and looks at the bottle. This, of course, is meant as a sort of symbolic overture, an abbreviated announcement of what the picture is going to be about, just as the overture gives a musical preview to an opera. As the picture is tragic, this overture was meant to be tragic and to symbolize the inescapable attraction of alcohol and its dramatic and tragic implications. Most unexpectedly and unpredictably, however, the audience burst into laughter when they saw the bottle and again when Ray Milland came to the window. The producers were terrified. A laugh at this early stage was a death knell for the picture.

Here again the composer was called to perform an operation. Rosza explained in music that this was not just a bottle hanging out of a window, which might be funny, but that this bottle *symbolized the drama of alcohol*. He did something only music could do. The effect of his operation was that the next preview, which was given with Rosza's score running with the picture, had completely the effect desired and planned by the producer, the director, and the actor, Ray Milland. The power of the music had completely eliminated the visual reason for a laugh, and this effect was a general effect on the audience, a majority of which undoubtedly was unmusical, did not notice the music at all, did not care for it, and would probably be completely unmoved and unimpressed by any music if played without the support of the visual effect of the picture. But the combination of both sound and picture, if done in the right way, is a perfect mixture, able to influence an audience in a pre-arranged, preconceived way.

Let us say a young actress is nervous. She has a bad habit of tossing her head just before or after she says a line of dialogue. A composer can correct this. He can make it seem with music as if that toss of the head was intended—and anything that seems intended on the screen usually passes for conscious acting. By underscoring that toss of the head with a strong musical beat it will now look as if it was an intended gesture, not a nervous and disturbing mannerism. Or, if minimizing the gesture seems the best policy, he can partly negate that toss by including it in an offbeat of the music.

Or let us say a nervous girl gives all her lines a little too fast. The composer can slow this up by getting a breakdown of her rhythm. He will find out, and it is almost always possible to do so, that her acting and her manner of speech have a certain rhythm, let us say $3/4$ or $4/4$, and so on. Now he will select a slower metronomic beat for the music and write music in a tempo which is slightly slower than her natural quick rhythm. The trick is not to select a rhythm that is *very* much slower but rather one that trails just a little bit behind her and almost seems to fit in with her tempo but really does not quite. This has the effect of making her seem calm and collected on the screen when actually she is performing too quickly.

Also, it sounds almost incredible, but one can really give the illusion of making a person who is a little overweight seem thinner than he actually is by a musical trick. Bassoon music, for instance, suggests thin people, and by using a bassoon or the lower notes of the clarinet or even

a flute, all of which are associated with a rather hollow sound and which are very often used in connection with thin spiritual characters, one can actually make that person *appear* thinner, at least psychologically, which is all that counts in a fast-moving picture. At the same time, you can accentuate a tall thin person by giving him the proper musical illustration. Let a bassoon play while Basil Rathbone stalks over the screen, and you can bet a dime against a dollar that there will be a laugh.

4.

The importance of the composer in the role of a play doctor becomes clear at once if we stop to think for a moment that the composer is usually the last man to work on a picture. Everything is completed; the entire picture has been shot, cut, and made ready in its final form. All the dialogues and some of the music actually seen in the picture (such as someone playing a piano or singing a song) have been recorded, and the picture has been shown in a preview. Only *then* the composer is called in.

But usually he has no influence on the script, the directing, the photography, or on any other part of the picture. There are, of course, exceptions, and these exceptions just prove how unsatisfactory and basically wrong the present system is. When, for instance, the director John Brahm prepared his picture *Hangover Square*, featuring a mad composer-pianist who dies in a fire while playing his piano concerto, the composer Bernard Herr-

mann was called in *before* Brahm started to shoot the picture and before the script was completed. The music had such a dominant position in the picture that the composer was asked to give his advice for the very construction of the script. Thus the music in this case was not just added onto a completed film but was basically integrated with the action, the various scenes, the photography, and the complete structure of the picture. The result is unforgettable for anybody who has seen and heard the film.

A similar method, even more interesting, was adopted in Herrmann's first film *Citizen Kane*. Here he succeeded in having the director, Orson Welles, actually tailor many of the sequences to match the music. As you might remember in this rather sensational film, there were many photographic montages used throughout the film to denote the passing of time. Herrmann intended to write complete musical numbers for these montages. In other words, instead of a mere atmospheric or rhythmic underlining of a mood, he decided to write brief pieces. Welles, in turn, cut many of his sequences to match the length of these pieces, in order not to interfere with the musical form and to achieve a complete blending of music and picture.

Citizen Kane, of course, is strictly a high-brow picture and, as such, suspicious to the average Hollywood mind. But while this collaboration between composer and director is still a rare exception, and while the generally accepted rule is still to do the picture first and the music later, there might well be a development in the devising

of motion pictures to the effect that the composer will be called in to devise and plan a picture from its very beginning, will be considered as an equal to the director, the writer, the casting office, and the men who design the sets and the costumes. This would put him in the position composers of dramatic music, whether it be opera or ballet, have always maintained. The letters between Verdi or Strauss and their librettists, or, in fact, the history of any successful opera, show clearly to which decisive degree the composer influences the construction of a libretto, the continuation of scenes, the very essentials of the action, the development of characters, and the timing of the whole. Such a close working together had always been considered essential from the first preliminary stages all the way to the finished product.

Although this happens only rarely, some producers already go to the extreme of shooting a scene to a playback of the music actually conceived by the composer for this particular scene, thus inspiring the actor and the director and giving the whole scene an emotional intensity which can never be reached if the music is added to it afterward. The torrid love scene between Tyrone Power and Gene Tierney in the film version of Somerset Maugham's novel, *The Razor's Edge*, was actually filmed while an orchestra played the precomposed background music on the set. The music created a mood that is usually lacking on the "cold" set. Ironically enough, to enhance action by music was customary in the silent days, but because of the technical problems of the sound film it is seldom employed today.

To let the action on the screen grow out of and be intimately associated with music would indeed be the nearest approach to the dramatic intensity of an opera, a preconceived and thoroughly integrated combination of action, words, and music, which has always produced the highest results in dramatic art.

If ever the Hollywood composer should be elevated to such a position of creative participation in the making of a moving picture, he would advance a decisive step toward the creation of a real film-opera, a music drama on the screen, conceived and created with the same intensity of purpose and purity of intention as an opera of the old days.

The movies, while they have taken everything in literature and drama, all the musical comedies and shows, any short story or historical event, have never been able to transform an opera into a picture. Not one of the famous operas has been filmed or, if so, the attempt has been unsuccessful.

The basic laws of opera and motion pictures are moving on two completely different levels. Only the preconceived *film-opera* can bring them together. You can break up a drama and put it on the screen. But the music written for an opera is static. If you break it up, as you have to do if you film it, you kill its very essence. Take any of the famous operatic arias. In order to film it you cannot just put your singer on the stage, train a camera on him, and shoot. You have to break it up, have to approach him from different directions, have your camera wander around, showing the singer, the con-

ductor, a bassoon player in the orchestra, and a bald-headed man in the audience trying to prevent a fly from settling on his head. And by doing so you water down the power of the music. The intensity of an operatic score seems to be mysteriously attached to the very limitations of the stage. If you split up the three acts of *Tosca* into thirty or forty, you might get a wonderful screen play based on Sardou's drama, but you will have to throw out the music or you will get a bastard and a flop. Opera cannot be dissolved by cameras and flashlights, and if you play *Carmen* in a bull ring the people will see a lot of wonderful bulls, but Bizet's music will sound weak, empty, and futile. And when it comes to the last test they will throw it out and call in Al Newman to write them some real Spanish music.

But if one day a composer of genius should enter this new medium, the motion picture, under the proper conditions, a musical-dramatic piece not less important than any opera of the nineteenth century could be created and could bring the enchantment of opera, the laughter and the tears, the enthusiasm and the thrilling excitement that opera has been, is, and will be to thousands, to the many millions of the audience for the motion picture.

This might seem a far-off and fantastic possibility. The majority of the famous or serious composers of today, at least in America, have not written anything for the motion pictures. Hollywood, in most cases, is deadly afraid of them, and they in turn sneer at the pictures and look down on them as something far beyond their dignity.

5.

I spoke to many producers and music directors in Hollywood about a problem which was of course very dear to my heart, and I asked them all the same question: "How does a new man ever get a chance to write a picture score?" I have never received a straight answer to this one. Everybody seems to agree that in order to get a commission to write a score in Hollywood the very first and most essential requisite is *that you have written one before*.

This puzzled me. When Max Steiner, who is so great a man that he takes you to lunch at the Beverly-Wilshire Hotel, passes a line of 125 famous people waiting to be seated and walks right in and sits down, when the great Max Steiner told me (while we were watching beautiful girls diving in the azure waters of a swimming pool) that he had written 193 motion-picture scores, was still going strong at the rate of ten a year, and that once in a while the thought of retirement was crossing his busy mind, I felt that here at last was a man who might be able to answer my question.

"You see, Mr. Steiner," I said, "all my life I have been a champion of composers; I have helped them to get their operas performed, their symphonies played, and their piano sonatas printed. I have placed them with the radio and I got Jascha Heifetz and Lily Pons to look at their music. Many times I have come to Hollywood to

find out what I could do for them here, but without any success. Tell me, how does a new man, a man who has never written a picture before, ever get a chance in Hollywood?"

Steiner took a long look at a tanned blonde emerging from the pool in the brilliant sunlight and then he remarked that he felt that was a very intelligent question. This pleased me, and it sounded promising. But it wasn't.

"You see," said Max Steiner, "the trouble is that everybody is afraid to try a new man. If I go to the boss—and I can go and see him any time I want—and say, 'Look, here is a genius, a marvelous composer, a new Al Newman, almost a new Max Steiner. He has written ten symphonies, four operas, a whole cabinetful of chamber music, and he can write fugues backward,' the boss will sadly look at me and say, 'Max, we have three and a half million dollars invested in that picture. What is going to happen if his music is not good?'"

"That is a difficult one to answer, isn't it?" said Max Steiner, dreamily lighting a three-dollar cigar. "But let us say I'll insist, I plead with the boss, I really pour my heart out. 'All right,' he will say, 'send me some of his records.'"

I felt that the conversation was not going the way I had hoped it would. The thought of seeing Jack Warner sitting in his living room listening to records by Roy Harris made me shiver in the hot California sun.

"One day," Steiner continued, "I talked David Selznick into listening to some records by a famous New York composer. You wouldn't believe it, but he called me at

three o'clock in the morning long distance from Bermuda. He just said one sentence:

"‘Max,’ David Selznick said, ‘you must be nuts!’"

I knew by now that I was defeated, and only as a feeble conclusion to the talk I asked him:

"But even you once wrote your first score; how did you get in?"

"I was here as an orchestrater," he said. "I was just hanging around, doing my daily routine of scoring, till one day they were looking for someone to write a picture in a hurry. I was the only one around, and that's how I got in."

"And if one does not hang around?"

"There is only one way," said Max Steiner. "You have to know someone. Bernard Herrmann knew Orson Welles, and when Welles made his first picture, *Citizen Kane*, he told them it was music by Bernard Herrmann or no picture. They fought him with violence and tears, but you know Welles. Herrmann got the job, and today he can pick the pictures he wants. And Miklos Rosza knew Alexander Korda back in London. George Antheil knew Ben Hecht. Dave Raxon knows——"

"And if you don't know anybody?" I asked. I knew it was the parting shot. The battle was over.

"That's tough," Max Steiner said.

And then he added as an afterthought something which seemed to me the final solution to the mystery and which ambitious young composers might as well remember before they buy a ticket to Los Angeles.

"You know," he said, "we really don't want anybody

else here. We are already enough and we can take care of all the business there is. The fact is: *the bases are loaded.*"

6.

If a psychoanalyst would probe into the dark and mysterious origins of all this he would probably find that it goes back to that day in 1935, that evil day when Arnold Schoenberg, a recent arrival in Hollywood, and a man who belongs there like a battleship belongs in the lake in Central Park, walked into Irving Thalberg's office at M-G-M. Thalberg had sent one of his henchmen to Schoenberg to ask him whether he would like to write the music for Thalberg's picture, *The Good Earth*. Schoenberg said he'd like to. After he and his wife arrived at M-G-M there was first some confusion because Thalberg kept Schoenberg waiting for twenty minutes, but it shows the awe-inspiring grandeur of Hollywood, and of M-G-M in particular, that Schoenberg, who had *never* waited for anybody in all his sixty-one years, *threatened to leave but actually did not*. However, these twenty minutes might have played an essential part in setting the stage for the following historical scene.

Finally the great Thalberg arrived and apologized to the great Schoenberg. Then he asked him what his terms would be for writing music to *The Good Earth*.

"My terms are very simple," said Schoenberg. "I want fifty thousand dollars and an absolute guarantee that not a single note of my score will be altered."

Deadlines, Click Tracks, and Stop Watches

Y

YOU ARE NOW entering Projection Room No. 3 on the lot of Goldmine Pictures in Hollywood, California, U.S.A. It is Monday, August 5, at ten o'clock in the morning. It is a beautiful day—but, as every day is beautiful in California, nobody pays any attention to it. Nobody, not even the radio, ever mentions the weather. It is beautiful. Period.

Before penetrating to Stage 8 that houses Projection Room No. 3 you first had to get through the gate. The gate, entrance to Goldmine and its million-dollar realm, is heavily guarded by unsmiling police. These men do not wear the uniform of Los Angeles County or the state of California. Their badges and hats tell you clearly that they are members of the armed forces of the Empire of Goldmine. You will find the same well-equipped and smoothly trained armies at the gates and all over the lots of M-G-M and RKO, Paramount or Warners', Republic and Universal and 20th Century-Fox.

You have left the territory of the United States. You have entered Movieland.

The projection room is a miniature picture theater. It is equipped with luxuriously upholstered easy chairs for some two dozen people. Halfway forward there is a desk with telephones, shielded lights, many buzzer signals, and a huge, luminous stop watch. The stop watch ticks and ticks like a heart. You soon will learn that it is a heart. It is the life center of everything that will happen in Projection Room No. 3. If it would cease to tick, life would cease.

Make yourself comfortable in one of the chairs. There is plenty of room. There is nobody here but you, the composer, who is to write the music to the picture *The Horseman and the Bridesmaid*, an assistant, and a secretary. They take their seats at the desk. The lights go out—only the shielded desk lamps softly illuminate the pads on the desk and reflect eerily on the faces. There is a buzz. The first reel of the picture appears on the screen.

What you see is a work print: without technicolor, without the finishing touches, but otherwise complete, cut down to the last detail and approved by producer and director. Of the sounds, you hear the dialogues, you hear noises and some of the special effects such as the choo-choo train, the firing of a gun, the burr of a motor, or the padded rhythm of galloping hoofs, but of the music you hear only what has been *pre-recorded*. This means music you can see on the screen, such as a man playing a piano, a dance band with a smiling conductor, and a mad drummer or a lonely serenading guitar player. These selections had to be recorded before the scene was shot to make the action coincide with the music.

Aside from these isolated spots of pre-recorded music, the picture has no music. We are here to find out where the music has to be added, where background music should be heard, how each sequence should be underscored, what kind of music should express each character, where music will be needed to emphasize a mood or to help the picture by the proper "play doctoring." We are here to "spot" the picture.

After the first reel has been shown it is rewound while the composer jots down a few notes, and then it is at once run again. At one spot the composer presses a buzzer. The reel stops. The operator winds it back a couple of hundred feet (ninety feet of film take one minute on the screen) and then shows the sequence again.

We are now concentrating on a scene which, the composer feels, needs a rather elaborate musical underscoring. The scene is checked with a stop watch. It lasts two minutes and one and two thirds seconds. It is labeled "M503, Comedy Sequence."

The business on hand for the people in that little projection room is now to analyze M503 for music, and this is done by putting on paper the beginning and the end of each musical phase, the "cue" timed to the fraction of a second. Remember: a foot of film takes only two thirds of a second to flash over the screen. And this one foot has sixteen "frames," sixteen single shots, sixteen single little pictures—and a lot can happen during these two thirds of a second. A shot can be fired; a door can close and suddenly change an ocean of noise into the silence of the grave; a dancer's toe can touch the ground

in a jump, bringing a definite, split-second climax to a dance.

All this is measured foot by foot on a special machine and translated with the help of a huge chart into two thirds of seconds. The timings are written down, split second by split second. After hours of concentrated work the sequence is typed out on a cue sheet and the scene now reads like this:

PRODUCTION #1470

M503

HORSEMAN AND THE BRIDESMAID

(comedy sequence)

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----|---|
| :00 | 1. | Start on dissolve to Vera and Sam entering parlor, all smiles. |
| :04 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 2. | Vera closes door and walks around Sam, smiling at him. |
| :06 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 3. | Sam turns half around, facing her and smiling broadly. |
| :07 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 4. | He attempts to kiss her cheek as she quickly walks away and o.s. ¹ |
| :10 | 4A. | Cut to c.u. ² of Sam as he looks at o.s. Vera like a love-sick calf. |
| :11 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 5. | He starts o.s. toward her. |
| :12 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 6. | Cut to med. shot of Vera seated on love seat as Sam goes over to her. |
| :15 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 7. | He sits down beside her. |
| :16 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 8. | Vera: "This is nice, isn't it?" Sam: "Yes." |
| :19 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 9. | Vera, softly: "I hate crowds." |
| :20 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 10. | Sam starts to put his arm around Vera. |
| :22 | 11. | Sam: "So do I." |
| :22 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 12. | He starts to lean toward her to kiss her. |
| :23 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 13. | Vera jumps up. "Oh, your hat!" (Sam is seen falling forward.) |

¹ o.s.—off screen.

² c.u.—close-up

- :25 14. Cut to c.u. of Sam's face buried in pillow.
- :26 15. He slowly gets up with disgusted look on his face.
- :28 16. Vera, o.s.: "It will be safe here."
- :29 17. Cut to Vera starting over to tray with champagne as she continues: "You can watch it to see that no one takes it."
- :31 18. She reaches for champagne bottle.
- :31 $\frac{2}{3}$ 19. Cut to c.u. of Sam with pillow in his hand.
- :32 $\frac{2}{3}$ 20. He tosses it back of sofa as he dryly says, "Thanks."
- :34 21. Cut to med. shot of Vera as she pours champagne.
- :36 $\frac{1}{3}$ 22. Cut to c.u. of Sam as his eyes gleam and he slides over to end of sofa.
- :40 $\frac{1}{3}$ 23. Cut to med. shot of Vera pouring as Sam leaps on screen, making another attempt to kiss her.
- :41 $\frac{1}{3}$ 24. Vera, quickly: "I suppose in St. Joe, a lady who drank a whole bottle of wine with a visitor would be considered indiscreet."
- :48 $\frac{2}{3}$ 25. Sam, laughingly, "Yeah, I expect so."
- :50 26. Sam heads for her again. "But you know, I——"
- :50 $\frac{2}{3}$ 27. Vera cuts in: "But then [she hands him his drink]—conventions in Europe are different, you know."
- :55 $\frac{1}{3}$ 28. Vera, with bedroom eyes, "After all—I'd rather not be stuffy, wouldn't you?" Sam: "Yeah."
- 1:01 $\frac{1}{3}$ 29. Vera: "American men, especially Westerners, are so slow."
- 1:05 30. She crosses room and goes over to large lamp and cups first globe with her hand.
- 1:10 $\frac{1}{3}$ 31. She blows out light.
- 1:11 32. Cut med. shot Sam as he smiles and takes a sip of his drink.

- 1:11 $\frac{2}{3}$ 33. Vera's o.s. voice: "One has to be so careful of gossip."
- 1:14 $\frac{1}{3}$ 34. Sam smiles and picks up her drink from table.
- 1:18 $\frac{1}{3}$ 35. Cut to c.u. of lawyer at window.
- 1:20 36. Cut to med. shot of Sam seated on sofa, as Vera comes and sits beside him.
- 1:23 $\frac{1}{3}$ 37. She takes drink from him as camera dollies up to closer shot.
- 1:25 $\frac{1}{3}$ 38. Sam: "You know, Vera——"
- 1:26 39. Dialog. pause as camera dollies to med. c.u. and they look at each other.
- 1:27 $\frac{2}{3}$ 40. Sam: "In those long nights out there on that prairie, this is what I used to think of."
- 1:32 40A. Vera, artificially: "Really?"
- 1:33 $\frac{1}{3}$ 41. Sam: "Yes, I've had a hard life. Long rides—dry camp."
- 1:39 42. Sam looks serious as he lifts up his glass to her.
- 1:40 $\frac{2}{3}$ 43. Sam: "To you, Vera." They touch glasses.
- 1:41 $\frac{1}{3}$ 44. They take sip and Sam puts his glass over on table.
- 1:45 $\frac{1}{3}$ 45. He turns toward Vera, putting his arm around back of her.
- 1:47 46. Sam: "And you know—lying out there under those prairie stars——"
- 1:51 $\frac{1}{3}$ 47. Cut to c.u. of lawyer at window as dialog. continues: "And no noise but that of my pony grazin'——"
- 1:54 48. Cut back to sofa as Sam looks at Vera.
- 1:54 $\frac{2}{3}$ 49. Sam continues, "And maybe the howl of a coyote or two."
- 1:56 $\frac{1}{3}$ 50. Vera looks into his eyes.
- 1:57 $\frac{2}{3}$ 51. Sam: "And you know, I used to think——" (He leans toward her to kiss her on last dialogue.)
- 1:59 52. Cut to c.u. of lawyer in window, wide-eyed.
- 2:00 $\frac{1}{3}$ 53. Cut to c.u. of Vera as she moves glass around to Sam's neck.

- 2:01 54. She starts to pour wine down his neck.
2:01 $\frac{2}{3}$ 55. Cut to med. shot as Sam leaps up. End
 cue.

If you stop to think that for generations past composers were supposed to look at the moon or listen to the birds and brooklets before writing beautiful music you realize that we had to go a long distance till we came here to Hollywood to meet the man who sits in a projection room and constructs his own straitjacket, measured by seconds and thirds of seconds—a queer and unheard-of garment indeed to provide for musical inspiration. He and his assistants will go on working in that projection room for many hours or days, will continue analyzing the whole picture, and will sketch out on cue sheets a full hour of music—the equivalent in time to the first act of *Tristan and Isolde*—broken down in seconds and thirds of seconds!

These strangulating limitations in space, however, are only half of the story. The limitations in time are the other half.

The composer arrives at home with a pile of thirty-one cue sheets, and the first thing he does (after telling his wife that this will be the greatest musical score ever written to a picture in Hollywood: "It will make history in this town, sweetie") is to take a look at a huge calendar on the wall. Today, you remember, is August 5, Monday. The composer takes a red pencil and slowly and deliberately puts a circle around Tuesday, August 27. This, my friend, is the date, set in advance, for the recording of the complete score, of a score, mind you, of

which not a single note has been written up to now. It means that he has three weeks to compose the music, to write it out neatly and clearly in a piano sketch, to have it orchestrated, to have all the orchestra parts extracted and duplicated, and to be ready, absolutely ready, for a recording on August 27. Because on that day, a day still slumbering peacefully in the arms of the dark and unborn future, but circled with the flaming red of life and imminent danger on that calendar on the wall, on that day, at nine o'clock in the morning, there will be a conductor, a staff of technicians, a spy or two from the front office, and fifty-seven musicians waiting for him on the recording stage. And he knows that he'd better not keep fifty-seven union musicians, at blank-blank-blank dollars an hour, waiting till nine-seventeen. He'd better not.

Three weeks, thinks the composer as he sits down on his desk. He looks at the thirty-one cue sheets and at his stop watch. He takes the first cue sheet, turns around, opens the piano, takes a pencil—and his mind goes blank. All of a sudden he feels like going out and getting drunk or taking a trip to New York or just going to sleep and having a long, long rest. He closes the piano, throws away the pencil, and goes over to the couch in the corner. But just before he closes his eyes he takes one last look at that calendar on the wall. He sees the flaming red circle. He jumps up. His mind snaps to attention. His brain is echoing beautiful music. He opens the piano, grabs pencil and paper, and begins to write.

Here you have a perfect example of the magic power of a deadline. Most people think of the creative process

as something vague, nebulous, a mystery that cannot be explained and controlled and that is like rain: it comes from heaven or it doesn't come at all. There is nothing anybody can do about it. Prayers may help. Nothing else will.

This might be so for rain, but it isn't so for imagination. I have known many writers and composers who would muse aimlessly through days and nights, going to the movies, collecting stamps, or taking silly girls to dances. Their minds just didn't produce. But many of these rambling geniuses became strangely and mysteriously fertilized by the mere knowledge that they had to finish a score or a book by a certain day. It wasn't the fact that they would get a check on that day. Money had nothing to do with it. It was just a date in a contract or a simple letter that made all the difference in the world to their creative powers. They got out of bed three hours earlier than before (or five or eight, as the case might be); they threw whisky bottles, girls, and mystery stories out of windows; they bought a filing system at the five and ten, had their typewriters repaired, their pencils sharpened, and their pianos tuned. With the deadline, mysteriously, came a concentration of thought and real inspiration, and they were able to write first-class works. They were not waiting for rain any more. They commanded the clouds to gather and the rain came down.

Beethoven would listen to the cuckoos and brooks and at last came Euterpe, the lovely muse of music, and kissed him, and there was his symphony. But if you look at your wall and see a red circle around the twenty-

seventh of August you had better not wait for Euterpe to come and kiss you. Deadlines don't kiss. They expire.

With the deadline softly but adamantly guiding his hand and mysteriously filling his brain with melodies and rhythms, sequence after sequence and cue sheet after cue sheet are composed. Each of them is checked and rechecked with metronome and stop watch. It is written out in an elaborate piano score. Minutes, seconds, and split seconds are indicated at each bar. To the limits of his time (and—pardon me—his musical education) the composer puts in hints about the orchestration. As soon as the first sequence is completed he calls in his wife. He plays it to her and she thinks it is wonderful. Then the wife calls the studio. The studio calls the music department. The music department calls the contractor. The contractor calls the orchestrator. The orchestrator gets in his car and drives to the composer's house. (Why doesn't the wife call the orchestrator directly? I don't know. She doesn't. That's Hollywood.)

The orchestrator takes the first sequence home. He at once sits down and writes out a full score, elaborately laid out for an orchestra of fifty-seven men. He calls in his wife and plays it for her. She thinks the music stinks but the orchestration is wonderful. ("Your orchestration actually saves the picture, sweetie.") The orchestrator's wife calls the studio. The studio calls the music department. The music department calls the librarian. The librarian calls a copyist. The copyist gets in his car and drives to the orchestrator's house. He takes the full score home and begins at once to copy out the orchestral parts.

In the meantime the composer has finished the second sequence. He calls in his wife . . .

On the red-letter day, the twenty-seventh of August, at nine o'clock in the morning, the music to all thirty-one sequences is composed, orchestrated, copied out, and ready on the stands of fifty-seven waiting musicians. We are now in the huge recording room. It is a very attractive-looking room. The walls are scientifically constructed and beautifully curved to give the best possible acoustic effects. A battery of microphones is drawn up and purposefully spread all over the room. The composer, surrounded by his orchestrators, is frantic with apprehension. He is now to hear the first cry of the baby, that blessing of a three weeks' affair between a deadline and a stop watch.

The orchestra plays the music from sight. They have never seen it. Every bar is new to them, although it might remind them of something they have heard before. They do their sight-reading job in a miraculous way. They are not only highly trained and specialized for this type of work, but each of the men on that stage is a player of outstanding qualities.

Many of them are ambitious musicians who suffer from the killing monotony of their daily grind. Some of them play chamber music in their spare time, and about a hundred of them have formed a symphony orchestra and play concerts, just for fun—a busman's holiday if there ever was one. I heard them play Prokofieff's brand-new "Fifth Symphony," a difficult piece, which none of them had ever heard before. They played it beautifully and

with utter devotion. It was quite an inspiring sight to see these men, who make a lot of money doing hack work ten and twelve and more hours a day, sitting there, following attentively the conductor (a movie orchestrater in private life), and playing with magnificent precision, beautiful sound, and the most amazing technical skill.

The larger Hollywood studios have a permanent orchestra of fifty, the smaller studios one of thirty-six men. These have full twelve-month contracts—and a good deal of outside men are usually added for important scores. These men have to work hard, but they are better paid than any other musician—and today you find the best players from all over the country in the studios. Whenever you miss a first-flute player or that famous bassoonist in your local orchestra you know where to look for him. Another young man went West.

The music we hear now is the music for Cue Sheet M503—the story of Vera and Sam. It is rehearsed till it sounds perfect, and now the conductor gives the signal for the first “take,” the first recording. Red lights will flash on outside the studio. Whoever enters from now on will be shot on sight. A man has taken his seat at the control desk. His hands are at mysterious knobs and dials, his eyes on needles and trembling indicators. On the screen appears our friend Sam, the conductor’s baton comes down with a zip just when Sam and Vera are entering the parlor, the orchestra plays, the composer prays, and the first take is completed.

Immediately afterward the music comes back over the loud-speaker as the picture appears again on the screen.

Everybody listens and watches with tension. But the music does not quite fit the picture. It ends a trifle too early. The conductor signals for a second take. "O.K.," comes a booming voice from nowhere. The second take is better. The third is perfect: the harp glissando comes in just when Vera pours the wine down in Sam's shirt, and the sequence ends on Sam's leap. The music runs off in two minutes and one and two thirds seconds, just as it is supposed to. It seems like a miracle, but it really is only the perfect synchronization of three stop watches: the one in Projection Room No. 3, the one on the composer's piano at home, and the one the conductor here has his eyes fixed on while keeping on beating and beating and beating.

Time-beating is what he is here for more than anything else. He is not here to make the music sigh and laugh, to let it die down or roar up, as are his colleagues in opera or concert. Most of this has been taken care of by the composer. He has written the music so as to take *mechanical* care of all this. To get a crescendo he has added instruments gradually. To slow down a tempo he writes notes of a different value, spreading a measure that would take two bars to three. And the finishing touches are being put in by the silent man at the control desk. He is the "mixer." By turning one of his knobs or dials ever so lightly he can change that music coming over the microphones any way he wants. He can make it clear. He can blur it. He can make it fade out while everybody keeps on playing fortissimo, and he can make a lonely fiddle crash like the thunders of an angry sky.

The conductor has little part in all this. He doesn't even know what happens at the control desk. He has to keep on beating that rhythm and watching that stop watch. He watches it as if his life would depend on it—and in a way it does. His first task is to be a human metronome.

Let me give you an example of what the human metronome is called upon to accomplish. While they were in the midst of shooting *The Horseman and the Bridesmaid* somebody had a brain storm.

"We need a Mexican ballet in the café scene. We will shoot it tomorrow."

So they call an agent. And the next morning there is a first-class Mexican troupe on the stage, with girls and boys and guitars and tambourins all ready to enter the immortality of celluloid. They have a dance ready which they have done many times before, and they have, of course, the music for the dance, which turns out to be a well-known Mexican tune in a cheap arrangement.

So they shoot the dance with the dancers on the set to a playback of the old Mexican tune in that cheap arrangement. While they are shooting, the music is recorded on wax. In the final print of the picture they cannot, of course, use the cheap Mexican tune: they have an original score by Goliath Colossal for the picture and everything has to be original music.

The record of the dance, taken during the performance in the studio, goes to Goliath. He plays it, listens to it, notes down the rhythmic pattern, and writes a new Mexican dance—probably not as good as the old one, but original music by Goliath—duplicating to the very last

rhythmical details the old tune. It has the same length, the same climax, the same spots of guitar chords and tambourin clashes. When it is played in the picture you will swear that this was the tune the dancers danced to when the sequence was shot.

Now watch our human metronome. Here is what happens: The orchestra gets the music of the *new* piece, the original score by Goliath. But in a sound booth a recording machine plays the *old* piece, as recorded in the studio during the initial performance. The conductor, through earphones, hears this, the *old* piece, and conducts it. The orchestra follows the beat but actually plays the *new* piece by Goliath. Result: perfect synchronization. The dancers on the screen seem now actually to dance the new piece, down to the last nuance and to a fraction of a jump or swing.

Such mechanization might shock many people who think that music has gone a terrible distance downhill since the days when Orpheus first plugged his lute and cried his heart out in sweet melodies, but these people haven't seen anything yet. What would Orpheus say, really, if he should meet the final accomplishment of music in all its beauty and gentle freedom—the click track?

There is a parade coming down the street. People are marching; somewhere a band is playing. You can film the parade but you cannot record the band at the same time. The microphone can do it, but it will sound blurred and ineffective. So you film the band, silent, and add the music to it later on.

You send your silent film to the cutting room, and the music cutter will take a good look at it. At last he will single out a prominent marcher in that parade, maybe the leader or the man with the bass drum or just some busybody who is always in front and will attract the attention of the movie audience. Everybody in that parade marches slightly differently (just watch one, even a military parade, and you will see how much difference there is), so he picks one man, watches his rhythm, his movements, and his posture. Whenever the man puts his foot down, or whenever something happens in that parade that requires a rhythmical beat, the cutter punches three slits in a brand-new sound band. Every time these slits will slide over the light that produces sound there will be a loud, booming click. There is no other sound on the band. Just hundreds and hundreds of clicks and booms, a definite and inescapable rhythmic pattern.

So what does the composer, the late descendant of the divine Orpheus, do? He doesn't sigh or cry his heart to the wind and waves. He goes in a recording room and listens to the clicks. He stops them with his stop watch. And when he is through with it and has written his score, and when you will see the picture you will think these people really marched down that street while the band played that great, that immortal march tune by Goliath, "At the Crossroads of the Underworld."

Yes, sir, and the next time you see Fred Astaire tapping out a rhythm with that stupefying precision, remember again the click track. There are maybe fifty people dancing with him—and if you would just go and hang

up a microphone somewhere while they dance, the sounds would be staggered and it would sound like "Memories from Echo Lake" and not like a tap dance. So they first record the music and then play it back on the set through a lily horn, a huge portable loud-speaker, and shoot the dance.

The next day Fred Astaire stands on a small dance floor. So do fifty other dancers (they might not be the ones who danced in the picture yesterday—all they will have to do is tap). From high above fifty-one earphones are dangling down and everybody grabs a pair and puts them on. On the screen appears the picture, the dance as filmed silently yesterday. Over the earphones comes the sound of the pre-recorded music. Eyes on the screen, earphones over their heads—click, click, click, tap, tap, tap—it is the darnedest combination of artistry and technique, isn't it?

Now let us return to the recording room at Goldmine, where we left fifty-seven musicians, one conductor, a mixer, and a nervous composer shortly after 9 A.M. It is now two o'clock in the morning—the next morning—and they are still there. The musicians still have to play clearly, loudly, and distinctly. You mustn't be tired and doze while scratching your fiddle when you play into a microphone.

But now the last sequence is completed. The men go home and so does the composer. It is all over for him. If he wants he can now take that trip to New York. But he won't take it. He will turn up again at the première of the picture, not because he wants to see it—who wants

to?—but to have a good look in the producer's eyes after the show is over. There can be various shades of gleams in those eyes. They will tell him clearly and without the slightest chance of a doubt whether the *Hollywood Reporter* will headline the next morning: "GOLIATH REFUSES GOLDMINE BID. STUDIO DOUBLES OFFER," or "GOLDMINE FIRES DAVID. LONG-HAIR DOOMED."

So everybody goes home, and all that is left after three weeks of labor and endless hours of excitement is a little sound band, one tenth of an inch wide. This is the sound track, carrying all the music for the thirty-one sequences—but nothing else. It will soon go to the "dubbing" room of the sound department and will find itself here in the company of an astonishing number of brothers and sisters, all belonging to the Sam and Vera family.

First there are the dialogue tracks. Most of the dialogues have been recorded during the actual shooting of each scene. But there are always dozens of noises in the air—from an airplane to a bumblebee. Your ear might not notice them, but the microphone does and will register them where they don't belong. So you have to shoot some of your dialogues later once more. You have to take them many times till the lip movements really match the original picture. This is the one you will select for your final track.

And then you have your pre-recorded music: the piano player, the lonely guitar, the dance band. And you might have separate tracks for singers, another one for a chorus, or separate tracks for wood winds and brass and percussion. Then you have tracks with acoustic close-ups, such

as a harp glissando, a flute solo, or drummer in a café. You might have as many as sixteen musical tracks.

Noises, of course, want their own tracks: the bark of a dog, the knock at the door, the squeaking of Boris Karloff's shoes when he walks down the corridor. (This reminds me: I think I forgot to tell you what mickey-mousing is. It is a musical effect, kept on from the serene times of Moe and Max, to make music coincide with scenic effects. Every time Boris Karloff puts down his foot while he sneaks down that dark corridor a trombone and the timpani go boom and boom and boom, or a piano goes glissando from the highest top to the deepest bottom while a fellow falls down the stairs—ha! ha! ha!). There might be four or five or six tracks with barking dogs and slamming doors and squeaking shoes.

So there are any number of separate tracks, all completely separate from each other, running on separate bands—and you can go and correct every inch of any of these sound tracks any time you feel you should. Not only can you remake a track or a section of it without bothering about the others, you can take any piece of any track—a single bar, a tone, a cry—take it out of the track and replace it with a piece from another, a better track. You can take the best parts from three or four or any number of tracks of the same scene and put them together like a jigsaw puzzle till you get the best possible result.

All this is the work of the unsung hero of the sound film, the music cutter. He has to be a trained musician, able to read a score, and it is his intricate job to intercut any number of takes of a tune, of a song or an orchestral

piece, until the best over-all job is achieved. This has to be done by the score, and since there are usually many tracks to be kept "in sync." at one time, and the exact desired tone to be located and replaced, this is indeed no minor job. More often than not he has to fish out six different notes from six different takes, all within one bar, which means within a second or parts of it. This happens particularly with vocal tracks, where the singer hits his best notes almost never on the same take and where the brilliant vocal performances that thrill you when tenors and sopranos fill your local theaters with the beauty of their voices have really been put together through the music cutter's lonely work. Many great singing stars of the movies flop when appearing on the opera stage or in concerts because they have to deliver without the music cutter's helping hand, scissors, and cement pot and therefore have their songs recorded on film before they go on the air, to be sure of a first-class performance—which, in reality, is only the pieced-together fragments of ten third-class ones!

This will sound like music from Paradise to the harassed men who have to record a symphony orchestra on disks. After two and a half hours of rehearsals the supreme moment of recording is here. Everything goes well. The men in the control booth are already packing their brief cases while signaling their delight. And now, three bars before the symphony is over, the E string of Mr. Guensberg's fiddle, who plays on the fifth stand of the second violins, snaps. It's just a poor little crack. But Guensberg sits near a microphone. The little crack sounds

like a cannon shot. Guensberg's E string cost the Victor Company four thousand dollars.

But back to the dubbing department. All the tracks are now in perfect condition. You will now watch how they are dubbed on one single sound band. Again we are in a huge projection room. The mixers are at the controls. In a room next door the sound tracks are running at the same time—and in the projection room, while the picture is shown on the screen, the combined sound is heard for the first time. This is the hour of the mixers. Dials and knobs are turned. The proper proportions between all these sounds is established.

"Bring out the dialogue a little more."

"Tune the orchestra down."

"That chord is too shrill."

"The shoe squeaks too loud . . . That is too much . . . A little bit more . . . That's better . . . Hold it."

And after everything is established at the proper "level," the final take is made, the final combination of all tracks on the sound band which will be copied on the film. The picture is completed.

We leave the studio. The sun is just coming up over the mountain peaks. We surrender our passes at the gates and drive home through the cooling breeze of the early morning.

The canyon is asleep. Even Open Eyes does not hear us sneak in.

Let us catch a few hours of sleep. Tomorrow we are off to New York.

Night Flight

THE flagship Oklahoma left Burbank Airport in Los Angeles at 6:34 P.M., and three minutes later Hollywood and M-G-M and the palm trees and the oily smell of the sea and George and Boski and Peter waving a friendly good-by from the gate had disappeared in the bluish haze of the evening. We were heading East, racing away from the setting sun, and soon the first veils of the night began floating along the small windows of the DC-4.

That wonderful feeling of complete detachment from everything that only an airplane can give you began to take hold of me. For fifteen hours I was again to be completely isolated. No telegrams and messages, no telephone that rudely pokes its nose into your life, your sleep, your dreams. No special deliveries, no visitors ringing doorbells, no daddy will you please open that box for me, no fire engines and police sirens dinging through your thoughts. Nothing but the soothing hum of the motors and once in a while Miss Marjorie B. Taylor wiggling through the aisle with no other purpose than to cheer the passengers with that wiggle. Miss Marjorie B. Taylor is

a stewardess on the flagship Oklahoma. She is the most beautiful stewardess ever made by God and taught how to smile and to wiggle by the Educational Department of American Airlines, Inc.

From down below, here and there a town would greet us, its white and green and red lights trembling through the night, its distant life mirrored in silent rivers. From the hills the rotating fingers of beacons motioned us in eternal monotony.

Down there were the cities and the towns and the villages of America. Somewhere hidden in the night were Waco and San Antonio, where Max Reiter was conducting his symphonies and operas. Suddenly I remembered again that fabulous story that once had opened my eyes to the overwhelming potentialities of my new country. Many years had passed since. I knew now that there were many more Wacos and San Antonios sleeping down in the tremendous expanse of the continent.

Thirty years ago America had thirteen symphony orchestras. Now there were one hundred and fifty. They had gushed out of the soil with irresistible force. What opera had been to Europe these orchestras were to America: they symbolized the new force of a genuine, decentralized musical culture. I had seen and heard many of them myself from Florida to Oregon and from New Mexico to Maine. There were of course the famous orchestras in the East and West and Middle West that had become established national institutions and had long attained and passed the highest marks set by the great classical orchestras of the Old World. But I was not thinking of them. I

was thinking of the unknown men who began to assemble a few players, made them practice, got a high-school auditorium, and began to give music to their own community. This is what had happened everywhere in America in the last thirty years, the same thirty years that had seen the decline, the decay, the collapse in Europe.

These men began to understand that they could not build music in their communities by buying it, ready-made, precooked, frozen, canned, grated, and labeled F.O.B., in the canneries and factories and slaughterhouses of New York and Hollywood. These men were not satisfied any more with greeting Lily Pons on the six forty-one, hat in hand, flashlights, cheers. How do you do, may I present Miss Alderwyk chairman of our community concerts, enchantée Miss Alderwyk. Cars, dinner, autographs. Fervent applause greeted the famous star when she entered the stage in a stunning dress of red silk and white velvet. "The Star-Spangled Banner." Aria from *Lakmé*. "Rataplan" from the *Daughter of the Regiment*. One encore, two encores, three encores. Sorry mes enfants zat ees all. Kisses flowers thank you Miss Pons. Enchantée Miss Alderweek sorry no autograms all right three autograms that's all all right seven more good-by now. 'By, 'by, 'by, 'by, 'by, 'by. Step on eet we have to make the eleven twenty-four I love you all au revoir next year.

More and more people in America felt that that was not what they wanted. They began to feel and to understand that music had to be created and fostered and tenderly attended to by the community. It was not their idea that everything they attempted to do was going to

be perfect. Of course the Boston Symphony was better than the Symphony Orchestra in Huntington, West Virginia. But the Boston Symphony was the *Boston* Symphony. The orchestra in Huntington had started out seven years ago with a small group of professionals and amateurs who lived in the town, and they began to give concerts for three hundred people. Today every local musician played in that orchestra and there were two thousand people whenever they gave a concert. The conductor lived in the town. The players lived in the town. They were part of the community, and so was their music. Huntington is a town of eighty-five thousand. How many towns like that were hidden down below?

Miss Marjorie Taylor tiptoed through the aisle of the plane, smiling with everything she had, and began to put the lights out. The night outside was black, no gleam, no star, no light from below. All I saw were the red and green lights on the tip of the wings of the DC-4. They were only a few feet away, but they looked like distant stars opening and closing their tired eyes in eternal rhythm. The hum of the motors had become inaudible. There was a silence which you never can hear down below, an absolute concentrated silence. I was thinking back to a visit I had made a few weeks earlier to the city of Columbus, Ohio.

Miss Taylor pushed a button and my seat reclined. She gave me a blanket and a pillow and disappeared in the dark silence. But I could not sleep. Through the silence I heard a mysterious loud-speaker whispering:

"The next voice you will hear, ladies and gentlemen,

will be the voice of Mr. Izler Solomon, who will tell you about the Columbus Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Solomon is presented to you through the courtesy and with the compliments of Music in America, Inc., a corporation with a membership of one hundred and forty million and with branches in every state, county, city, town, village, borough, street, home, and room in the United States. Mr. Solomon's story will be a very simple story. It's a story you can hear everywhere throughout the land, but it is a new and exciting and invigorating story, a story, ladies and gentlemen, you couldn't have heard twenty-five years ago. It's the story of a new, a different America. And it is a story which you cannot hear anywhere else in the world today. And now, Mr. Solomon."

"Good evening.

"I was born in Saint Paul, Minnesota. When I was still a boy my parents moved to Kansas City. I grew up, helping out in my father's grocery store and playing the violin whenever I had an hour to myself. A friend of my parents once heard me play. He sent me to New York to study.

"At the age of eighteen I got my first job as a music teacher at Michigan State College in East Lansing. Soon I found myself involved in ever-increasing musical activities at the public schools, and after a short while we formed an orchestra among the advanced students. At the end of the term I received a visit from a group of my pupils who all had played in the orchestra and who now were to leave school.

" 'We don't want this to be good-by,' the kids said. 'We worked with you for three years. We played at concerts,

at assembly, and we played in the band on the football field. We had a wonderful time and we don't want to leave school and just let it all be a pleasant memory. We would like to continue.'

" 'What do you want to do about it?' I asked.

" 'We would like to keep our orchestra together,' they said. 'We have it all worked out. Here is the plan.'

"They presented me with a plan for a community orchestra, elaborate and well thought out to the last detail.

" 'All we need is a man to work with us, train the orchestra, and conduct the concerts. That is why we came to you.'

"Of course I said yes, right there and without a moment's hesitation. We began rehearsals in the fall and soon were ready for our first concert. This was the beginning of the Lansing Civic Orchestra. I kept it on for five years till I had to leave the town and when I left I knew that what we had started was there to stay.

"In 1941 a group of citizens of Columbus asked me whether I would undertake the formation of a local orchestra. I auditioned more than a hundred players in Columbus. The idea was to use only amateurs and residents of the town. Nobody got paid. After months of preparations we gave three concerts during our first season. The result was that all of Columbus seemed suddenly bitten by the music bug. I realized that something quite unexpected had happened. What had started as a very limited and amateurish attempt had now all of a sudden the makings of something bigger and much more

important. I decided to take a personal gamble and broke up my associations in Chicago, where I was living at that time. I moved to Columbus because I felt that to see this carried through I had to become a member of the community.

"A second, a third season followed. Our budget had gone up from four thousand dollars to twelve thousand, our concerts from three to nine. But now I realized that we were beginning to outgrow ourselves. Our players were not the same bunch of amateurs any more. They began to smell the blood of real music making, and unless we were ready to establish them as a professional orchestra they would take other jobs and just drift away.

"Of course you cannot go into the orchestra business on a budget of twelve thousand dollars. Now was the time to find out whether all we had done was just an accident or whether it really meant something to the community. I was prepared for complete defeat or complete victory. It isn't really very difficult to get Ashley's Drug Supplies or the Whitefield Paper Mills or the People's Savings Bank to subscribe a couple of thousand dollars to subsidize an orchestra. They do it all right to help the cause, but they really do it to get their name among the sponsors in your program book. This is not what I wanted to know. I wanted to find out what *the people* thought about us.

"They never refuse to pay their share for their streets and parks and for the fire department and the policeman on High Street. There is no town in the country that would do without a public library, and nobody ever

thought of it as a self-sustaining or as a money-making proposition. If there are no sufficient funds to give the schools all the facilities and all the comfort they need the people form a parents' association and provide the money to give their children and to give themselves what is needed and wanted. These schools and parks and libraries, churches and synagogues, museums and art galleries are not 'necessary.' You can *exist* without them, but the people do not want to *live* without them. They have become part of their lives. Nobody gets up and says, 'The city is losing money on the Botanical Garden. Let's close it.' The people, you and I, we want to see a rose once in a while, a blooming bush, a few fantastic orchids in a hot-house after our day's work is done.

"But music? Would the people consider music as another one of these unnecessary necessities? They had already plenty of music in Columbus. Many of the great traveling artists paid regular visits. There was an abundance of visiting orchestras: the New York Philharmonic, the Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Boston symphonies came regularly every winter, and I knew of course that we could not for a long time hope to equal their standards. Would the people continue to be satisfied with these traveling one-night flower shows and libraries and art galleries? Or would they want their own musical center, an orchestra for their own community?

"We organized a drive, and for three weeks the ladies of our committees canvassed the town. They went from door to door, from house to house. More than three thousand people responded. It was the greatest response any

drive in the town ever had. The people did not get anything for the money, no publicity, no ribbon, not even a seat for a concert. Their money was accepted as an outright gift, and the people made us a gift of twenty-six thousand dollars.

"Now I knew that they wanted us.

"The rest seemed simple enough. We have now a full-time professional orchestra in Columbus. We are playing a twenty-week season. We are touring twenty-five smaller towns within a radius of a hundred miles. We have a radio broadcast every Sunday afternoon. Our budget this year will be \$128,000. Half of it is raised by the sale of tickets and by the radio. The rest is given to us by the people of Columbus."

A sign flashed on at the pilot's cabin. FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT. NO SMOKING PLEASE. The lights in the plane went on and people began to stumble out of their sleep. Miss Taylor was all over the place, handing out chewing gum, advice, smiles. "Please keep your seats till the door is opened. No smoking, please. We will stop in Dallas for fifteen minutes," a slightly used record sounded out of her lovely mouth. And there were the lights of Dallas; there was the Socony horse condemned to rotate forever and ever on top of a building, and the loud-speakers of Dallas's air terminal began to hunt for passenger McLaughlin.

Fifteen minutes later we were in our seats again. Everything was fine, but Miss Taylor was missing. I looked out of the window as the plane began to move,

and there she was smiling her way across the field. As she disappeared through a little door marked "Employees Only" night descended at once.

Miss Taylor had been replaced by Miss Castiglioni. Miss Castiglioni obviously was from New York. She did not smile much, and when she had to smile she smiled only with her face. "Fasten your seat belt," Miss Castiglioni said with a hidden threat in her voice, and off we were in the night and the endless sky.

It is a good place to think about music in America, this DC-4, I felt. In Europe you would think about it in an old theater where a plaque would tell you that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart conducted his *Magic Flute* here. Or you would think about it within the dark walls of the Music Collegium in Winterthur or on the sunlit stairs of the Teatro Fenice in Venice, founded in sixteen hundred and something. In America you think about it in a four-motored airplane.

I kept thinking about the strange and exciting fact that we were flying across a country that had organized its musical life at a time when everything in Europe had already been completed, measured, registered, and put down in the creaking book of tradition. The first American symphony orchestra was only a hundred years old. America had opened its first music school in 1867, when Europe had already celebrated the two hundredth anniversaries of many of its old centers of music. The Metropolitan Opera had been opened the year Richard Wagner had died!

I pushed the button and straightened up my seat.

I looked down again. There were no lights I could see. It was a dark, endless expanse of land, the endless continent of America. For hours and hours and hours we would travel; fifteen hours in that mighty DC-4 and we would still be in America when we would land in the morning. It had taken me the same fifteen hours to fly from New York to Paris across the ocean, all the way to another world. It had taken the Pilgrims months to make that trip. It had taken them two hundred years to settle and conquer the continent we were now crossing in fifteen hours.

I leaned back again and listened to the music of the propellers. When these pilgrims, these adventurers, these conquerors had made the perilous trip across an unknown and uncharted ocean they did not carry fiddles and flutes in their baggage, or cembalos or books on counterpoint. They carried axes, knives, ropes, nails, plows, guns, and cradles. They did not come to build opera houses and concert halls. They had to cut down the jungle and kill Indians and get the harvest in lest they would perish. The fiddlers and cembalo players, the composers and dancers stayed home. The trip was too rough for them.

The people who made the trip had little time for music. Their music was the rhythm of the ax cutting down the forests. The echoes of the canyons. The symphonies of the big rivers. The hammer driving spikes in railroad tracks. The songs of the gold diggers. The Saturday-night dance of the cowboys. The love songs of the young, and the hymn songs of the old. The grand opera of conquest and discovery. The mighty crescendo of the young cities.

The thundering chords of the sunrise over the mountains and the lament of the endless desert.

It took them two hundred years to complete their task, two hundred years till they had time to sit down and think about music.

I looked out of the window. A silver moon had come out and filled the firmament with a bright, eerie glare. The wings of the plane were a brilliant white, and the little red and green lights at the tips were dimmed and almost gone. I closed my eyes again.

For three hundred years it had been an accepted pattern of thought that Europe was the home of music. Only in Europe's valleys and on Europe's hills had Orpheus played his lute. But was he still there? Couldn't it be that what happened here, down below, all over the mighty land, was more than just a fleeting glimpse of fate? Maybe the ancient temples had been destroyed forever and the evicted goddess of music had come here. Maybe that ark had made a one-way trip.

It had happened before. It had happened in Babylon and Egypt. It had happened to the mighty Aztecs and Assyrians and Persians. Where were the golden temples of Carthage and the days when Hannibal and his elephants came towering over the Alps? Where was Gustavus Adolphus and his mighty Swedish army that had once ruled half of Europe? What was left of them? A Nobel Prize, a tennis-playing king, and smorgåsbord.

I had seen the ruins of huge theaters in Athens and Pompeii and Syracuse where multitudes had once

cheered, laughed, and cried at the plays of Sophocles and Aristophanes and had listened to the music of cymbals and harps. Grass and trees and flowers were sprouting now through the cloven stones of the arenas covering the shattered stages that once had been the center of a world. Goats were now climbing through the rocks. The harps were silent and the cymbals were buried in the dust.

And yet for centuries this had been the cradle and the home of beauty, art, philosophy, poetry, music, and Orpheus had roamed the land. But one day it was all over. "Oh, it's going to come back," people would say. "Just wait a few years. It's just a slump after a war. It has always been and it cannot just vanish. It has to come back."

But it never came back. History had made one big step and had forever disappeared in the dust cloud of eternity.

When it began again it began centuries later and it began somewhere else. It began in Germany, in France, in Holland, in Spain, in England. These countries had been dark and wild and their people had been despised barbarians to the refined poets and painters and architects and composers of Greece and Rome. But now they were not dark and wild and barbarous any more. Now it was their time, their century, their millennium. And now it was America that was wild and distant and dark, shrouded in the drifting fog of history.

Seen from the age-old lawns and carefully cultivated gardens of the European musical landscape, America had

been a wild and tremendous country where music was two hundred years behind the accepted standards of European culture. It was the land of the fastest trains, the longest bridges, the highest skyscrapers, the wildest murders, the richest people, the fastest divorces, the loudest booms, and the mightiest crashes. But nobody would think of America as the land of music. America was Chicago, Pittsburgh, Hollywood, Wall Street, Ford, Spam, Dick Tracy, Bob Hope, Du Pont, Lucky Strike, Babe Ruth, Miss California, Oak Ridge, but America was not music. Vienna was music, and Salzburg and Paris and Budapest, with gypsies and czardas and pusztas and beautiful girls.

But now it was all different. The old pattern was wrong. It was time to throw it out and to look around for the new truth.

Every American composer had always come to Europe to study music. There was no other way for him to learn and to get experience and training and a feeling for what it was all about. Howard Hanson, Aaron Copland, Randall Thompson, William Schuman, Walter Piston, Virgil Thomson, George Antheil, Roy Harris, Douglas Moore, Harl McDonald, Roger Sessions, Ernest Bacon, Otto Luening, Quincy Porter, Frederick Jacobi: American School in Fontainebleau . . . studied with Frank Bridge in London . . . Prix de Rome . . . lived for three years in Europe . . . studied in Germany . . . in Austria . . . at the Mozarteum in Salzburg . . . with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. But now these men had returned home.

They were living, working, writing in America, and now they, in turn, were teaching a new generation of Americans who did not go abroad any more but who could learn everything they needed right here and who grew up in the surroundings, the language, the air of America. Howard Hanson was now the director of the Eastman School in Rochester, William Schuman was president of the Juilliard School in New York. Quincy Porter was at Yale. Walter Piston taught at Harvard, Randall Thompson at Princeton, Roger Sessions in Berkeley, Ernest Bacon at Syracuse, Douglas Moore and Otto Luening and Frederick Jacobi in New York. Aaron Copland was not teaching, but he was influencing a whole group of young American composers with his style that had become so thoroughly and deeply American since he had returned and settled down at home. And many of the European teachers who had attracted Americans were now teaching here. Paul Hindemith was at Yale, Ernst Krenek in St. Paul, Darius Milhaud in Oakland, Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky in Los Angeles, Karol Rathaus and Bohuslav Martinu in New York.

Everywhere the makings of a new American language in music could be noticed, a language which could not have grown in Paris or Vienna or Rome but only right here in California and Texas and New York. It was not the idea of taking a few cowboy tunes or hymns or hill-billy songs and dressing them up as symphonies and suites. Anybody could do that, any pioneer who would bravely penetrate the wilderness of the music library at Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue in New York City. It was

a new texture in the music which made it American, just as every note in Verdi's music is Italian, in Schubert's music Austrian, in Wagner's music German. It was all only a beginning and it would take generations to let it mature and grow and be ready. It would take its time because there had never been a short cut in the maturing of a culture.

Everywhere in the many years of my travels through America I had seen these signs of a new musical destiny. A few months ago I had mingled with four thousand people who had come from all over the United States to attend a Music Educators' Conference in Cleveland's huge auditorium. I had watched them listen to lectures, concerts, discussions on all aspects of music with deep devotion and purposeful concentration. They were told that today there were thirty thousand school orchestras and bands in the United States. When this same organization of music educators had assembled for the first time forty years ago 107 people attended the convention.

I had seen twenty thousand people in the Hollywood Bowl, in Robin Hood Dell, in Ravinia Park, in New York's Lewisohn Stadium and in Tanglewood listen to operas and symphonies and to the great artists performing great music. Twenty years ago all this did not exist.

I pushed a little button marked "Attendant" and Miss Castiglioni came marching up the aisle.

"May I help you, sir?" she said with the neutralized voice implanted in her by the American Airlines.

"Yes," I said, "you can. Just answer one question. How

many people listen to the broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoon?"

Miss Castiglioni did not seem shocked or surprised. I could see how her mind repeated with lightning speed that course in the treatment of queer passengers which she undoubtedly had passed with flying colors.

"I don't know, sir," she said with a smooth voice, "but I'll be glad to find out for you when we get into Washington. We will be there in ten minutes."

"Never mind. It's just a game. Take a guess."

Miss Castiglioni's trained mind produced a smile.

"I would say five hundred thousand," she said.

"Well, it's really nine million. What do you say?"

"Nine million," Miss Castiglioni repeated icily. "Do you care for some chewing gum, sir?"

I didn't, and Miss Castiglioni went back to her little seat to muse about the strange and never-ending problems of an air hostess. She seemed unimpressed, but I wasn't. I had to think that there were nine million people down in the country who would sit at their radios for hours to listen to operas in German and Italian and French and once in a while even in English—more than the combined populations, every man and woman and child, of Austria and Switzerland.

I looked up. Outside the first gray and red and vermilion were rushing over the sky. In the early light I could see Washington. There was the Capitol where the people had voted two hundred billions to finance a war. I thought of the twenty-six thousand dollars the citizens of

Columbus had collected to give themselves an orchestra.

What could a tenth of one per cent of two hundred billions do toward giving music in America the place it deserved? Was it forever to be a matter of passing the hat around? That principle had worked in the past and it still worked in the present. But would it always work? Would Mrs. A. and Mr. B. and Ashley's Drug Supplies and the Whitefield Paper Mills in Columbus and Huntington and Nashville, Tennessee, always be ready to chip in?

What would happen if one day they wouldn't? This had gone too far. It wasn't a whim of a few high-brows any more, nor the Diamond Horseshoe with white ties and black tails. It was a big and powerful thing and it was here to stay. The people now wanted it and the people would see to it that it would be preserved, that it would grow, bloom, and survive.

A tiny part of what the people had spent on the atomic bomb would be enough to build them a hundred opera houses and concert halls and enough to maintain and support them.

"It will take a hundred years till that dream will come through," a friend told me the other day.

Maybe it will. But even if it does, a hundred years isn't a long time. It's a little bit long for us, but it isn't long for a nation. It's just three generations of men, a little drop in the passing waves of time.

As I looked through the window I saw the towers and streets and bridges and rivers of Manhattan. Tugboats,

barges, ships, busses, trucks, trains, traffic lights. Steam, smoke, dust, haze—the silent breath of the city.

As we passed over the sky line it lighted up in a sudden flash.

The sun was out. The dreams were over.

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